

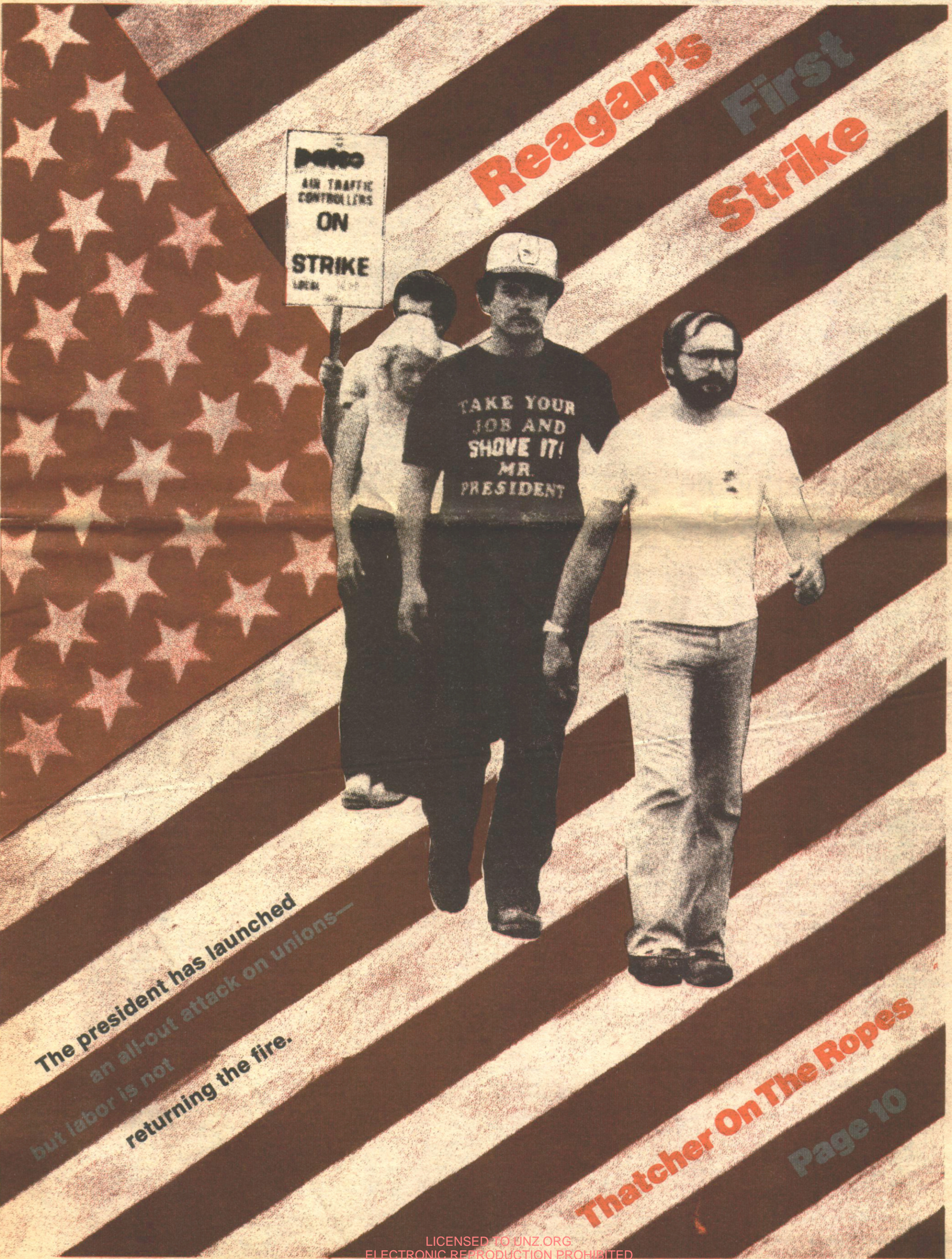
IN THESE TIMES



Black
Theater

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VOL. 5, NO. 33 AUGUST 26-SEPTEMBER 1, 1981 75 CENTS



The president has launched
an all-out attack on unions—
but labor is not
returning the fire.

Reagan's First
Strike

Thatcher On The Ropes
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THE INSIDE STORY



Working-class heroes at home and abroad

By Alexander Cockburn

The New York Times

U.S. Edition, Tuesday, August 4, 1981

"'Maybe we are crazy,' said Michael Fermon, a vice president of the striking Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization. Then again, maybe the controllers, like most everyone else, would just like to work shorter hours for higher pay."

"Whatever the merits of their case—and they appear to be dubious—the air controllers have no right to hold up the nation. President Reagan's tough threat to fire workers who are not back at work by Wednesday is appropriate. A settlement that rewards them for illegally withholding vital services would be a serious mistake...."

Polish Edition

"'Maybe we are crazy,' said Milosz Fermokiewicz, a Solidarity leader. Then again, maybe the shipworkers, like most everyone else, would like to work less hours for more Zlotys."

"Whatever the merits of their case—and they appear to be dubious—the shipworkers have no right to hold up the nation, which, under the leadership of the Polish Workers Party, is striving to raise productivity. Prime Minister Jaruzelski's tough threat to fire workers who are not back at work by Wednesday is appropriate. A settlement that rewards saboteurs of the national economy would be a serious mistake, and would merely offer comfort to the enemies of socialism."

U.S. Edition

"...although their work certainly requires discipline and creates stress, it is hard to feel much sympathy for the controllers. There is no evidence that the work is debilitating. At a time when other federal employees are asked to accept a 4.8 percent rise, there is little justification in giving them more than twice that much..."

Polish Edition

"...It is undeniable that the shipworkers occasionally endure harsh conditions, but no thoughtful Pole need feel sympathy for them. There is no evidence that their work is debilitating. And when other comrades are making heroic sacrifices, the shipworkers are not ashamed to demand extraordinary economic privileges..."

U.S. Edition

"...but beyond that, the equities here are really beside

This issue (Vol. 5, No. 33) published August 26, 1981, for newsstand sales August 26-September 1, 1981.

the point. The controllers have no legal right to promote their interests by damaging the national economy. If President Reagan were now to sweeten the deal already cut in June, he would only be inviting other Government employees in key positions to exploit their leverage. Living temporarily without regular air service is a heavy burden. Restoring it on the controllers' terms could be a disaster.

Polish Edition

"...but beyond that, the equities here are really beside the point. The saboteurs have no right under the Polish Constitution and the principles of socialist legality to promote their own selfish interests at the expense of the national economy. If Prime Minister Jaruzelski were to exceed the agreement already reached, he would only be inviting other groups of saboteurs and friends of imperialism to exploit their leverage. The saboteurs should know that whatever the price in lost production, the Government will never surrender."

The Washington Post

Union-Busting Edition, Tuesday, August 4, 1981

"The air traffic controllers strike is a wildly misconceived venture that deserves the government's extraordinarily severe response. A strike against an essential public service is always wrong in principle. It is also illegal, and the controllers' attempt to demolish the law is doubly wrong..."

Freedom-Loving Edition

"The Polish shipworkers strike is an extraordinarily gallant venture and that makes the Polish government's fierce response all the more heavy-handed and abhorrent to all friends of freedom. The right to strike is one of the inalienable attributes of a democratic society. Only in the 'workers paradises' east of the Iron Curtain is that right denied. Talk by the Polish regime of infractions of internal 'socialist legacy' is patently self-interested. The shipworkers' noble attempt to expose such socialist 'legality' as a form of slavery is entirely laudable..."

Union-Busting Edition

"...nor do the controllers seem to understand the position in which they have put President Reagan. He has just bet his presidency on his economic programs. But interest rates won't come down until people see inflation coming down, and economic analysts are currently warning their clients that there's not much evidence yet of any change in the underlying rate of inflation. That underlying rate is, essentially, the rate at which wages are rising. The money markets are watching wage settlements with fixed attention..."

Freedom-Loving Edition

"...The position in which the shipworkers have placed a government attempting to reform a static economy is one entirely of the government's making. Mismanagement, chronic shortages, and now inflation are all endemic to the ineptly-run socialist economy of Poland. The demands of the shipworkers may seem superficially to place that economy under greater strain, but this is a short term view of the crisis. The shipworkers are demanding a greater say in their work schedules, a feeling that they are more than mere robots in a system. The wage demands are symbolic and the symbolism is urgent. This is why all friends of freedom must pray that the shipworkers will prevail."

The Wall Street Journal

U.S. Edition, Thursday, August 6, 1981

"By choosing to go head-to-head with the administra-

tion and federal law, the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Union (PATCO) has put itself in the position of trying to bust the Reagan administration. And it should be obvious now, if it wasn't before, that the President simply cannot afford to let that happen, for all sorts of far-reaching reasons that have absolutely nothing to do with relations between the Federal Aviation Administration and PATCO..."

Moscow Edition

"By their blackmailing and outrageous demands, the shipworkers and so-called Solidarity union are trying to overturn the Polish government. The government, duly constituted, must resist with full force, for reasons which ultimately include the security of all socialist nations in the struggle against U.S. imperialism..."

U.S. Edition

"...Mr. Reagan has tried to restore public confidence in presidential policy...Central to this effort are clarity and consistency of presidential purpose on a whole range of issues with global implications. They include, for example, commitments to rebuild military strength, to restore the dollar to soundness, to cut taxes and regulation, to resist Soviet imperialism, to curb the wild ascent of federal spending. Resisting the demands of a small labor union was not even on the agenda until PATCO chose to try to strong-arm the White House. Now that it has, the symbolism is all too clear."

Moscow Edition

"The leadership of the socialist economies is trying to instill even greater public confidence in its policies. Central to this effort are clarity and constancy of socialist purpose on a whole range of issues with global implications. They include, for example, commitments to rebuild military strength, to eliminate petit-bureaucratic red tape and to resist U.S. imperialism. The outrageous demands of the so-called Solidarity union should not be on the agenda of History. Now that they are, the lessons and symbolism for all Marxist-Leninists are clear."

Alexander Cockburn is a columnist at the Village Voice, in which this piece first appeared.



Noel Neuberger

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IN THESE TIMES

As PATCO goes, so go the unions

By David Moberg

DENVER

ASK THE AVERAGE AMERICAN why the air traffic controllers went out on strike and the odds are that he or she would say, with little sympathy, that those characters making \$30,000 to \$40,000 a year were greedily after even more money—a \$10,000 a year increase, for starters.

But ask the average air traffic controller this question and the answer is quite different. I asked Carl Conant, the 33-year-old vice president of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) local at Stapleton airport in Denver, why he decided to make the leap: "The fact that there's nothing to look forward to. I'm frustrated by not having the best health plan, and I even have to fund 40 percent of it myself, and besides, I don't have a dental or eye plan. I have a 90 percent chance of not making it to retirement. I have no voice in the policies I am subjected to. Every

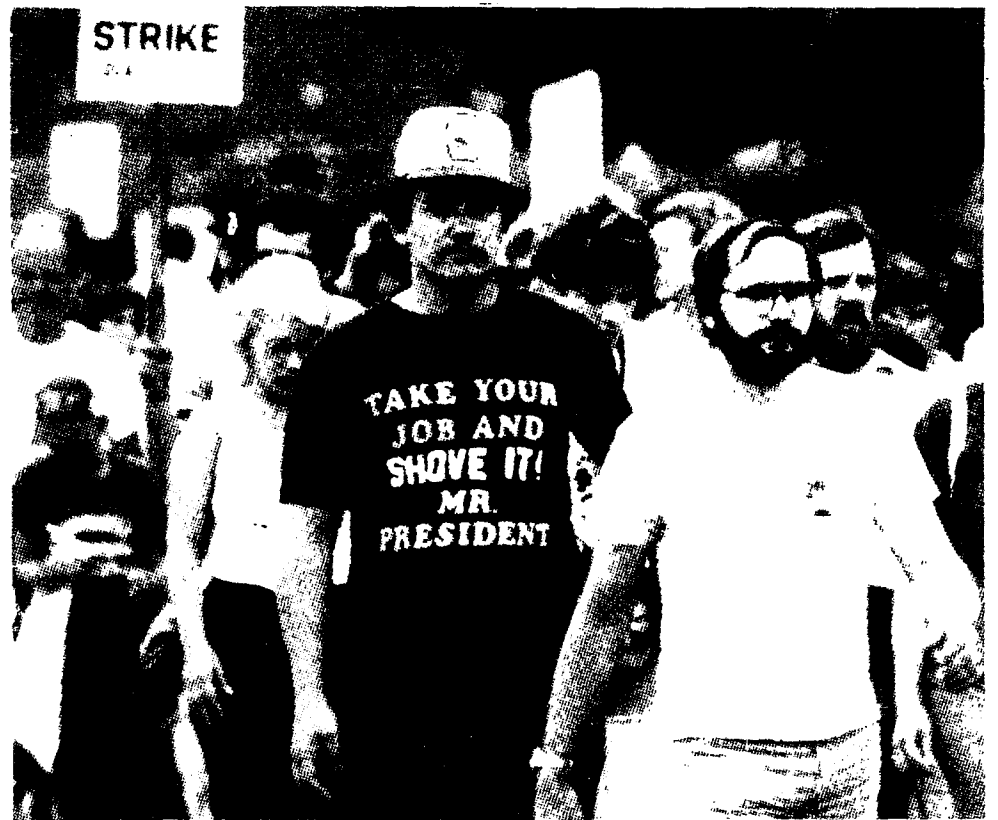
week there are new regulations, and I don't have a voice in the things I do. The equipment is not keeping up with the demands of the job: the same computer has been used for years and years, and there's no back-up systems: there's only one radar system at Stapleton.

"Money is definitely not the issue. If I could have a retirement plan, a shorter work week, good health benefits, good equipment and a voice in job procedures, I wouldn't want that \$10,000."

Not that PATCO workers don't think the money demands are justified. "It may seem like a lot when you relate it to the poverty scale," said Mike Fahey, 33, whose father was one of the people who helped establish the modern air controller system, "but over the last seven years I've had a net loss in my buying power of 26 percent."

But eventually the talk always comes back to the unique characteristics of the job that attract, and exhaust, the intense band of people who guide the nation's commercial and private planes through the skies.

"What I liked about air traffic was the

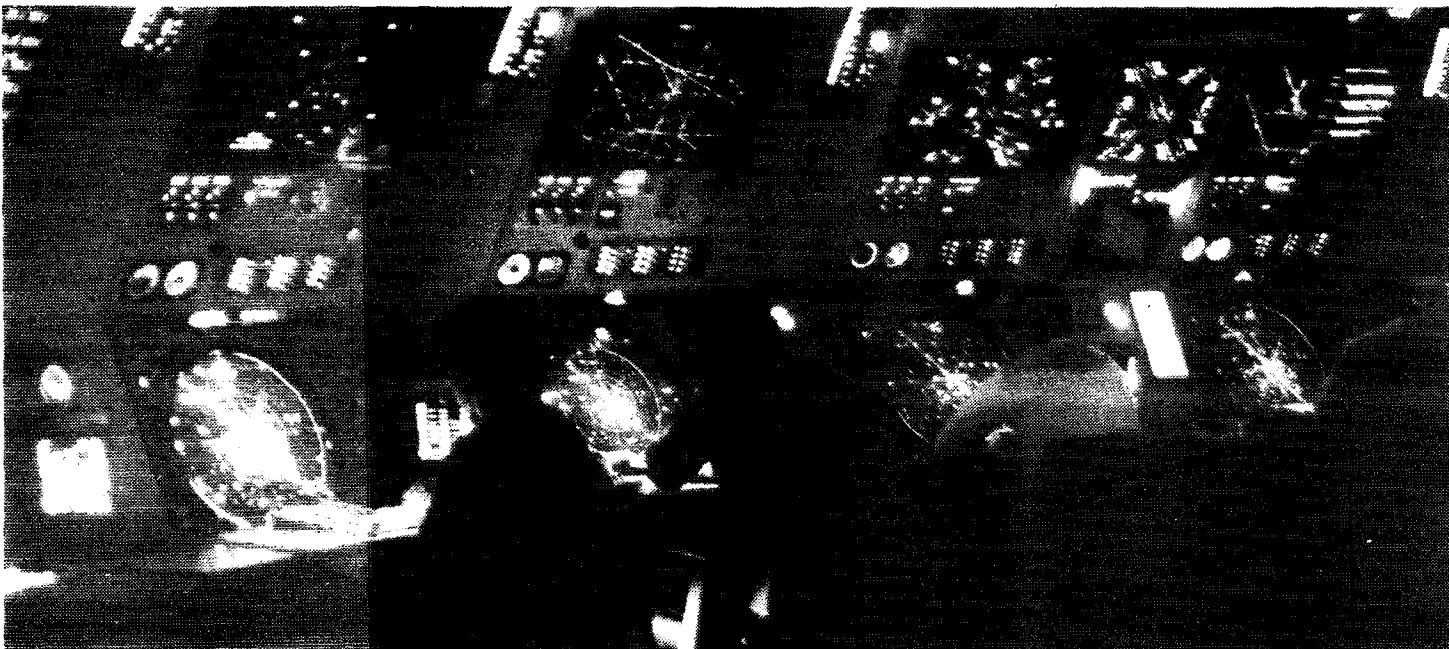


changing environment and continual challenge," Fahey said. "No two situations are really the same. But it is inherently stressful. When the traffic builds, your adrenalin heightens. Then the mental stress comes into play because of the adrenalin flow and the fatigue. When there is a close call, you don't analyze that there are two planes up there with

250 to 350 people at that time. But later you think, 'Christ, that was a close call. With one slip I could have killed them.' That is where the stress begins to work, and your heart stops."

"I was scared three times in my life," Larry Courtrone chimed in. "Once in Vietnam, in a place called Khe Sanh,

Continued on page 8



Mixed signals from French

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

THE FRENCH DEMOCRATIC LABOR Confederation (CFDT) has sent a strongly-worded letter to the American ambassador in Paris expressing its "indignation" at the sight of labor leaders in the U.S. being arrested and led off in chains.

In his Aug. 11 letter to ambassador Arthur Hartman, CFDT Transport Workers national secretary Antoine Barbero said without exaggeration that the spectacle of the Reagan administration's method of dealing with PATCO was followed "with much emotion and very great surprise" by the CFDT. "We found the television image showing the arrest of a union delegate and the use of chains particularly unbearable," he wrote.

Barbero recalled that the CFDT, as a staunch defender of both individual and union rights, has "always reacted vigorously against all attacks on freedom," whether in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Chile, Tunisia, South Africa, Afghanistan or Poland. This even-handedness, he remarked, gave the CFDT all the more justification to criticize the attitude of a government that rarely releases a chance to criticize the practices of countries "with a different political system."

He concluded by demanding "suspension of all repressive measures" against American air controllers and "the open-

ing of real negotiations with their representatives."

Privately, CFDT leaders may well share the general impression that PATCO handled the conflict clumsily. PATCO in particular, the American labor movement in general, seems to be paying the price of a corporatist trade unionism that has neglected building working-class solidarity—or, as Americans would put it, public support. Rather than criticize their American colleagues, CFDT leaders prefer to set an example of solidarity in action.

The Reagan administration's strongest ally in calming the French air controllers' solidarity movement has been none other than the cabinet's ranking Communist, Transport Minister Charles Fiterman.

French air controllers, mostly belonging to either the CFDT, the independent, relatively corporatist SNCTA (National Air Transport Controllers Union) or the Communist-led General Confederation of Labor (CGT), have had past experience with government attempts to limit their right to strike. In 1973, replacement of striking air controllers with military personnel ended in an air collision that killed 68 people (see box). On Aug. 7, the three unions met and agreed to boycott U.S.-bound flights in response to Reagan's massive firing of American civilian air controllers.

There was a difference in emphasis. The SNCTA insisted that its boycott was based solely on concern for safety. The CFDT was annoyed by this, considering

that international solidarity was also important.

Two days later, on Sunday, Aug. 9, the SNCTA and the CGT were called in by Transport Minister Fiterman. "The CFDT wasn't there because strangely enough we were informed too late," Barbero told *In These Times*, "and no one was available to take part. But we were kept informed of what was said. The

Ministry had received assurances from the American government that the necessary safety rules were fully respected." After their meeting with Fiterman, the SNCTA and CGT agreed to call off the boycott.

"We analyzed the American government statement on Monday and found it meaningless," Barbero said. "At the time of the 1973 air controllers' strike in France, the French government made just such a reassuring statement to its European partners. And we know that safety was not respected."

"Furthermore, beyond our natural concern for passenger safety, there is also the matter of workers' welfare and union rights, which in our opinion were being trampled by the U.S. government in its conflict with PATCO. So on Tuesday we told the other unions we weren't in agreement with their decision to suspend the boycott of U.S.-bound flights. We told our members to go on refusing flight plans for the U.S., Communist minister or no Communist minister."

SNCTA secretary general Jacques Fournier also had second thoughts. "The French government was put under intense pressure from American authorities who did not hesitate to lie about air security conditions following the replacement of the fired controllers," he said. The SNCTA has expressed willingness to join the CFDT in other spot actions, either in France or internationally.

Reactions have been similar in other European countries. ■

A crash settled the issue

PARIS—French air controllers had been on strike for 10 days on Feb. 24, 1973, when Prime Minister Pierre Messmer put into effect an emergency plan replacing civilian air controllers with military personnel.

Nine days later, on March 5, 1973, two Spanish airliners collided in French air space, killing 68 people. Investigation showed that inexperienced air controllers' confusion contributed to the crash.

Five minutes before the collision, the two aircraft were spotted converging on Nantes at exactly the same altitude. One of them was an Iberian Airlines DC-9 flight from Palma de Majorca to London. The other was a Spantax Concorde flight from Madrid to London.

Military air controllers in Brest could have prevented the collision by shifting

one of the aircraft to another altitude, but mistakenly thought there was no space available. So instead they told the Concorde to slow down, so as to let the DC-9 pass over the Nantes checkpoint first. In order to fall behind, the Concorde pilot asked permission to make a circle in the air. Receiving no response, he went into his turn, ramming into the Iberia DC-9, which crashed to the ground killing all 61 passengers and seven crew members.

With a wing ripped off, the Concorde pilot managed to land his crippled plane safely at the Cognac military base, saving all 100 passengers aboard—with no help from the military air controllers, who had long since lost track of both aircraft.

The incident ended military control of civilian air traffic in France.

—Diana Johnstone

IN SHORT

A day in the life

Here are three news items from a recent "Argentina in Brief" column in the *Buenos Aires Herald*, an English-language daily in one of President Reagan's favorite Latin American countries.

- "An astounding 73 percent of Argentine homes lack sewage connections, 43 percent lack running water and 66 percent do not have gas, said Francisco Garcia Vázquez, head of the Central Society of Architects, at a gathering of 250 architects in Buenos Aires. The architect said these figures show that 'the majority of the population are not correctly looked after.'..."

- "The Argentine navy is taking delivery today of the newest addition to its fleet, the French-built 'Granville' corvette. The 76-meter-long ship, built at Lorient shipyards, is a part of the renovation plan for the Argentine fleet. She is equipped with the latest technical developments in the defense field, being able to withstand conditions likely to arise in case of eventual nuclear, chemical or bacteriological warfare...."

- "Relatives of painter Miguel Sarangelo, who was taken away last Friday by unidentified people, have filed a writ of habeas corpus on his behalf with Federal Judge Eduardo Marquardt, well-informed sources said yesterday. Sarangelo's relatives said they had no news of him since last Friday at 9 p.m., when he was taken away by a group of people who had been waiting for him outside his home. After Sarangelo's abduction, his relatives said, a group of plainclothesmen went into the painter's atelier around midnight and searched it, throwing paintings and sculptures onto the floor...."

Dazed in Denver

President Reagan's hatcheting of government jobs—15,000 non-defense jobs will be axed by this fall, and another 22,000 will go in fiscal 1982—is supposed to increase government efficiency. But according to the *Wall Street Journal*, the cuts are having the opposite effect on the federal bureaucracy in Denver. Employees who've already been served notice "are doing little more than job-seeking before they have to vacate their offices." Their colleagues, in the meantime, sit around their offices in a fearful daze or brood about endless policy switches and reorganizations.

"You can bust your butt to get something out," complains a scientist at the Office of Surface Mining, where employees are in open revolt against their boss, Interior Secretary James Watt. "But then you have to coordinate with some guy who's so incredibly depressed he's practically paralyzed."

Alienation in academia

Bertell Ollman—professor of politics at New York University, author of *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society*, and inventor of the "Class Struggle" board game—will appeal an unfavorable ruling on his longstanding civil lawsuit against the University of Maryland. Ollman filed the suit after John Toll, the university's incoming president, denied Ollman a departmental chairmanship in July 1978.

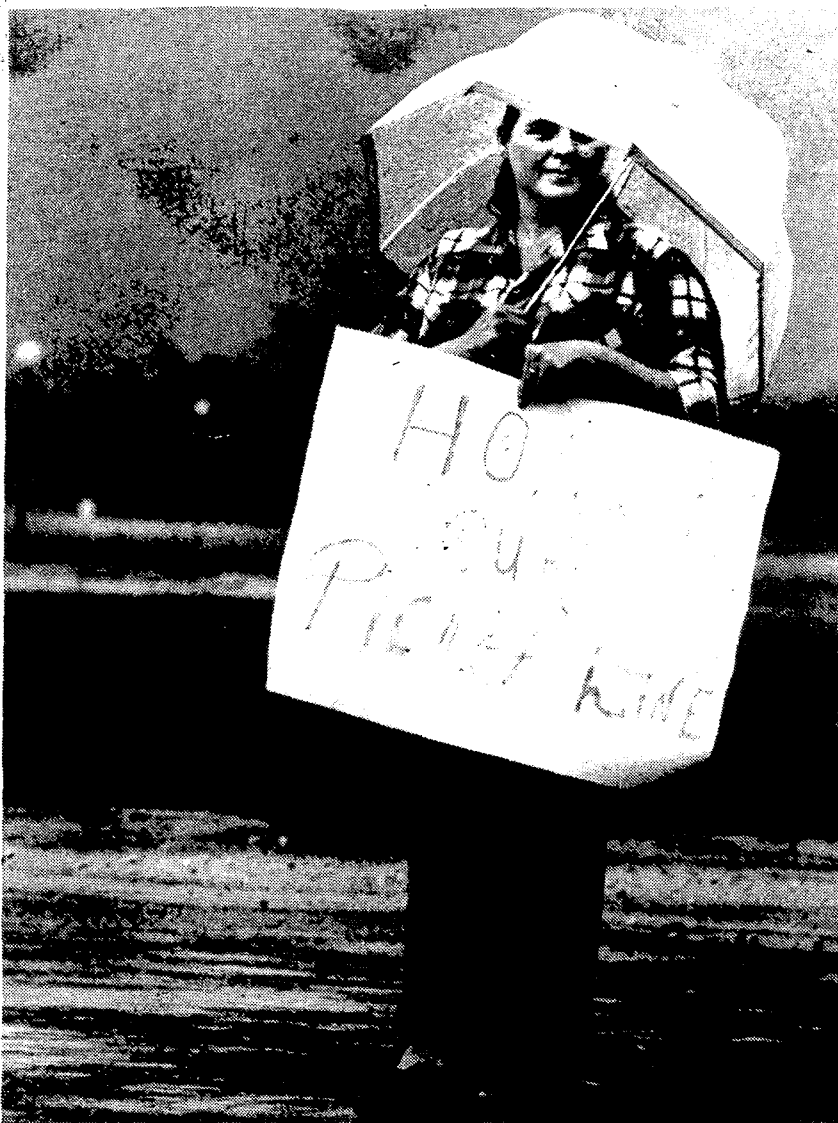
During the four-week trial, which followed nearly three years of legal preparation, Ollman's lawyers charged that the rejection was for political reasons and was thus a violation of his First Amendment free-speech rights. Testimony by university officials and others disclosed that, while Ollman waited for what was expected to be the automatic approval of his appointment by the university president, a powerful group of anti-Marxist dissenters—including the acting governor and several state legislators—voiced their strong opposition.

But U.S. District Court Judge Alexander Harvey could not bring himself to disbelieve Toll and other administrators, who claimed that Ollman—originally selected by a 10-member-faculty search committee from more than 100 candidates—simply wasn't qualified.

Down with the count

Top officials with the U.S. Census Bureau say they have decided not to tabulate households with same-sex "partners" because the results might be embarrassing to the government. According to the *Zodiac News Service*, 1980 was the first year that householders across the U.S. were given the opportunity to identify their live-in main squeeze as a "partner," rather than as a mere "roommate." The move reportedly was designed to gauge how many unmarried heterosexual couples were living together. But the Census Bureau will not admit that many gay couples may also have listed themselves as "partners." An anonymous top-level Census official says that those figures, if tabulated, would be too "controversial" and "embarrassing" to policy-makers who use the numbers to help formulate a wide variety of federal and state programs.

—Josh Kornbluth



One of 280 low-paid hospital workers at the Prestonburg, Ky., Highlands Regional Medical Center who withstood four months of violence from armed strike-breakers before being granted their modest demands in July. The strike pitted the service and maintenance workers, represented by District 1199 West Virginia/Kentucky, against the bankers, businessmen and non-union coal operators who sit on the hospital's board.

Striking nurses boost business

PITTSFIELD, MA—Administrators of a hospital in western Massachusetts got more than they bargained for when they tried a "business-as-usual" approach in negotiations with the facility's 425 registered nurses.

The nurses, members of the Massachusetts Nurses Association (MNA), walked out July 25 and have shown no sign of weakening in their resolve to win a pay increase of 33 percent over the next two years—substantially above management's "last and final" offer, made July 24, of 11 percent a year.

The strike is big news in this part of the state because the hospital, Berkshire Medical Center, is the main health care facility for the region. It is also only the second hospital in the state to have faced a walkout by its nursing staff (the first was Newton-Wellesley Hospital outside of Boston, which the MNA struck last year).

Management knew the strike was coming because, under Massachusetts law, the nurses had to give 10 days' notice that they were walking out. But the hospital, which had counted on public pressure to get the nurses back on the job, was jolted by the wide support the strike received from the community—support on a scale many say is unprecedented even for this union city, home of one of General Electric's largest manufacturing facilities.

According to Stephanie Craig, an MNA organizer, fund-raising efforts to support the nurses, such as a bake sale, have been "unusually successful." Support of the nurses' strike has even dominated the editorial section of the city's

daily newspaper, the *Berkshire Eagle*.

And then there is Frank Goldwitz, a local entrepreneur who says he is "concerned about the plight of the underpaid, overworked nurses." In addition to salting a pot for strike fund contributions (which he keeps in front of his clothing store on the city's main thoroughfare) with \$200 a day, Goldwitz also brings full breakfasts to the picket line each morning, subs in the afternoon, pizzas each night, and, in the wee hours of the morning, coffee and doughnuts.

This unlikely support for a union effort by a retail store owner has sparked other businesses to join in, and daily radio spots purchased by Goldwitz calling for support have served to keep public attention focused on the strike.

Asked why he was doing all this (Goldwitz claims to have spent more than \$15,000 so far in support of the nurses), he replies, "You can't understand what these nurses are going through until you see them marching, eating, dragging their feet on the line at 2 a.m."

But some nurses point out that Goldwitz is as much a shrewd businessman as he is a union backer in this case. In addition to contributing to the strike fund and buying meals, Goldwitz, who owns several "Guys and Dolls" discount clothing stores in the region, has been hiring 40 striking nurses for seven hours a day. And having nurses at work in his stores has brought free television attention and a good deal of walk-in business for Goldwitz, at least in his Pittsfield store. "This will make more money than *Star Wars*," he confides.

Meanwhile, with negotiations at an impasse, a federal mediator has been appointed. Craig says the nurses aren't in a mood to compromise: "When you have older women with only a few years to go before they retire saying they're

ready to strike, you know you're going to win."

—Melanie Scaduto and Dave Lindorff

South African fights expulsion

The residency status of exiled South African poet Dennis Brutus remains in doubt following a series of actions by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). On Aug. 10, Brutus received word that the Chicago section of INS had rejected his request for a change in status from "distinguished visitor" to "distinguished writer" permanently in residence. The case now rests with the Minneapolis office of the INS, which will hear Brutus' appeal. If denied the change in status, Brutus faces possible deportation.

Controversy over Brutus' visa arose on Feb. 6 when immigration authorities ordered him to leave the United States, where he has been employed for the last decade as professor of literature at Northwestern University. The INS charged that Brutus had applied late for a visa renewal and had worked illegally while awaiting its decision. Brutus explained that these delays resulted from his switching from his revoked British passport to a Zimbabwean one, but the INS in Chicago nonetheless notified him on June 25 that he should prepare to leave the country by July 5.

In challenging the denial of his visa, Brutus moved for a change to permanent "distinguished writer" status—not because he has given up on returning to his native South Africa, but to secure greater freedom of travel and other advantages. The INS has implied that such a change might be forthcoming if Brutus were to leave the U.S. and reapply for a visa. But Brutus and his attorneys hold that the change ought to occur without forcing Brutus to leave the country, and point out that his readmission to the U.S. would not be guaranteed.

Brutus has long led anti-apartheid struggles inside and outside South Africa. Jailed and then exiled by the South African regime, Brutus has played a key role in the banning of that nation's sports teams from international competition. In addition to his leadership of the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee, Brutus has agitated for the removal of U.S. investments in South Africa.

Support for Brutus' case has grown in recent weeks with the promise of the Congressional Black Caucus to write the Minneapolis INS in his behalf. Contributions and requests for further information should go to Dennis Brutus Defense Committee, 39 S. LaSalle, #825, Chicago, IL 60603.

—D.R. Roediger

Labor to rally in Washington

Participants in the Sept. 19 "Solidarity Day" demonstration in Washington, D.C.—called to assert broad-based labor opposition to Reaganomics (*In These Times*, Aug. 12)—will convene at 10 a.m. on the west side of the Washington Monument and begin marching to the Capitol around 1 p.m. Check with your local labor organization for details on transportation and the like.

Man vs. machine, round two

By David Moberg

DENVER

DESPITE GROWING PROBLEMS for their union, delegates to the Aug. 11-14 Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union convention in Denver rejected the call of their health and safety director, Anthony Mazzocchi, for "action for a change" and narrowly re-elected Robert Goss as president for a second term.

Mazzocchi's defeat on his second run for the office was a discouraging blow to the more activist elements in the union and the left both in and out of the labor movement. Many people had looked forward to Mazzocchi's potential influence based on his record of articulate defense of worker health and safety, civil rights and antiwar causes as well as his current advocacy of new strategies in organizing and collective bargaining and of initiating widespread discussion of forming a labor party.

Goss, 59, not only won by a margin of 72,856 to 69,090 (with delegates casting ballots in proportion to their local membership) but also carried in his slate of two vice presidents and a secretary-treasurer, upsetting an incumbent vice president, Ernie Rousselle, and secretary-treasurer Robert Palmer, who had rejected offers to run with Goss and supported Mazzocchi instead.

Despite deep disappointment, Mazzocchi, 54, said, "It wasn't a defeat." Formerly a vice president and a legislative director for the union, Mazzocchi believes the vote "showed that a group of rank-and-file people could fight a machine and come close. I'm more encouraged here than ever. People were willing to stand up in very cynical times."

Two years ago Goss won by only 3,200 votes. In the meantime Mazzocchi lost an important asset: the Canadian division became an autonomous union with ties to OCAW. In 1979 the division cast its 16,000 votes as a block for Mazzocchi, and could have been expected to do so again this year, with a membership that has nearly doubled. So Mazzocchi made significant inroads into the Goss base of support to come as close as he did at the convention during the second week of August. He picked up substantial support in the Texas and Gulf Coast region among oil workers who were angry with Goss' handling of the 1980 oil strike and gained votes in the Midwest and in the southern region. Goss had upset many union members and officials by promoting a merger with the Paperworkers union that would have eliminated jealously guarded democratic traditions of the OCAW and greatly inflated the salaries of staff and officers.

There was also a widespread feeling that although Goss was a likeable person who had made many friends among the old boys' network of union officials and staff, he was incapable of providing strong and imaginative leadership. Goss himself stressed his capacity to manage the organizational affairs of the union. During his campaign at the convention he offered no indication of new strategies for confronting the problems that have brought about a decline in the union's membership, a stagnation in organizing (especially by comparison with the previous two-year period when Mazzocchi tried innovative techniques involving rank-and-file union members for organizing drives while he was in charge of organizing), and a sapping of union bargaining strength with the powerful, rich multinationals employing

highly automated factories in the oil and chemical industry.

"Bob Goss has just not proven to me that he has the ability to provide leadership," said Joe Campbell, secretary-treasurer of a 4,000-member Houston oil local who, as a close friend, nominated Goss in 1979 but took the floor to nominate Mazzocchi this year. "He doesn't have the administrative skills to direct the union, and doesn't have the bargaining skills. My membership thought the oil strike last year was a disaster. If we'd had Tony Mazzocchi leading us, there's a good chance we wouldn't have even had a strike or it wouldn't have lasted as long." Mazzocchi advocated mobilizing massive public antipathy towards the oil companies in support of oil industry workers. Campbell was also impressed that Mazzocchi's suggestions helped his local in organizing many new workers last year.

"Bob Goss and I have a basic philosophical difference," Mazzocchi told the delegates. "We perceive the world differently. We perceive what the union should stand for differently. We perceive strategy differently." For many workers, that sparked enthusiastic support. "I came from a militant local, always looking to the future," Joe Butmark said. "Tony's

The vote was close and Mazzocchi supporters refused to see it as a defeat.



Tony Mazzocchi's bid for the OCAW presidency was the type of rank-and-file effort rarely seen in union history.

ideas sounded like ours."

In rejecting Mazzocchi as president, however, delegates were not always rejecting his ideas. Indeed, the convention passed a resolution favoring "a new political strategy for labor in the 1980s that will not rely on the Republican or Democratic Party for success" with no dissent.

Inside track.

Goss' victory reflected in large part the tremendous influence of the union's international representatives and a comfortable familiarity among many local officials with business as usual and a union that is part fraternal organization, part servicing operation for members, but definitely not a social movement. But as the vote came down to the wire—and even at 4 a.m. the day of the balloting—Mazzocchi and his supporters were close to



Delegates to the OCAW convention cast votes in proportion to their local membership.

swinging support that they think would have won the election—other quirky circumstances determined the results as well.

Approximately 90 of the 108 international staff representatives actively worked for Goss, even though the majority of headquarters staff appeared to be for Mazzocchi. Numerous reps were reported to have threatened Mazzocchi supporters or undecided voters with no service or other difficulties if the delegates didn't vote for Goss.

But Goss delegate Ed Gheldof of Detroit said simply that his people "went along with people we knew." And Jim Birdsell of Pampa, Tex., who was satisfied with Goss and thought Mazzocchi "a little bit too militant," added that their delegation discussed the race with the international representative. From every-

thing he told us," Birdsell said, "we couldn't find anything against Goss."

Mazzocchi's loss could also be attributed to his failure to hold all of his commanding lead in his home district in the East. Since 1979 the pro-Mazzocchi director has retired and been replaced by a Goss appointee. A few big, conservative locals that had been kept in the Mazzocchi camp last time out of loyalty to the director were lost to Goss this year.

Loyalty was strong in Goss' home district on the West Coast, even to the point of conniving to deny an elected Mazzocchi supporter a seat in the convention on the grounds that the local didn't have enough money to send him. When he came anyway, local officers called his company to say he was not on union business and he was fired. Yet in another local, international representatives chip-

ped in money to send a second pro-Goss delegate to split the votes that would otherwise have been cast by the local's president entirely for Mazzocchi. In other locals, in California and elsewhere, polls of members showed strong support for Mazzocchi but officials were solidly for Goss. It is likely that Mazzocchi would have won handily in a referendum vote throughout the union.

Relatively democratic.

Yet despite such complaints, the campaign and the convention itself were more open and democratic than in most unions. Mazzocchi was simply up against a basic problem of large organizations: those in power have the means and incentive to close ranks in self-preservation, and individually ambitious members see loyalty—usually described as "unity," as in Goss' "Unity Team"—as the road to career success. Although Mazzocchi developed much more of a rank-and-file effort in the campaign than in 1979 or probably at any time in union history, it was still not sufficient.

In such a close race, small things counted. Mazzocchi is an intellectual, although he dropped out of high school, and loves the inspirational political language and talk about the big issues. But he lacks the homespun, joking, convivial style of someone like Goss, who delivered a very clever political speech on his own behalf (all the while admonishing delegates about how he wanted to save them heartburn caused by too much "political rhetoric").

Instead of dealing as Goss did with the rumors spread about him or even devoting much time to a direct attack on Goss' record, Mazzocchi launched into a well-crafted speech about union democracy, multinationals, corporate disinvestment, the changing politics and economy of the 1980s, strategies for bargaining and organizing and the meaning of trade unionism. "I'm charged with being a dreamer," he said. "I confess. Yesterdays dreams are today's realities."

Mazzocchi's style—intense, serious, intellectual—made some delegates uncomfortable. They liked the fraternal club style better. Others found him "too radical" or too likely to stir up emotions. Many atomic workers, roughly one-tenth of the union, feared he was anti-nuclear.

Yet Neil Reimer, the former OCAW Canadian director, and now president of the new Energy and Chemical Workers Union, indicated what a union like OCAW could represent. An active part of the New Democratic Party in Canada, the ECW pushed for oil nationalization and plays a major role in formulating government energy policy along lines that emphasize social goals other than profit.

Although Mazzocchi has not decided on his future, it is unlikely that Goss could fire him as health and safety director. And others argue that the near-half of the delegates opposed to Goss will force the officers to be more circumspect and to work harder than they might otherwise. "When you get this close," Edward Hughes, president of a big 3M local in St. Paul, Minn., said, "the onus is on them to produce."

THE MILITARY

Full speed ahead and damn the allies

By William M. Arkin

WASHINGTON

THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT scored a bureaucratic victory when the White House announced Aug. 8 that production of the neutron bomb would begin immediately. But though the long-awaited decision on the controversial weapon was hailed in some quarters as a "brave" action by President Reagan, in fact the administration side-stepped, for now, the most difficult political issue—deployment of the new weapons in Europe.

Ever since newly-appointed Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger announced his support for the neutron bomb at a press conference in February, the administration has been grappling with a shrinking timetable for deciding the issue. According to congressional testimony, production of the two weapons destined to carry neutron bombs—the short-range Lance missile and new eight-inch artillery—was scheduled to begin in May and June of 1981. A final decision on whether to produce them with or without new warheads inserted was needed before the weapons began to come off the production line in August.

The Carter administration's solution, approved by Congress in the Fiscal Year 1981 authorization bill, was to build and deploy the new launchers and the neutron bomb components separately, thus requiring another executive-level decision before the Army could convert the regular fission weapons to neutron weapons. But under Reagan, officials of both the Pentagon and the Department of Energy argued that the two-step policy would increase costs and warned that later modifi-

cations might upset timetables for the massive nuclear buildup planned for the '80s. Those arguments prevailed and the new weapons will now be produced with the neutron components in place.

The neutron bomb, or "enhanced radiation/reduced blast" weapon is the latest technical "improvement" in tactical nuclear weapons. By adding radioactive Tritium gas to the fission formula, the amount of radiation (neutrons and gamma rays resulting from the energy created) is increased six-fold while the blast and thermal effects of the explosion are reduced. By increasing the amount and radius of the radiation, deaths are caused more through lethal doses of radiation than by blast and heat.

The military says it needs the neutron bomb as an anti-tank defensive weapon in the event of a Soviet attack on Western Europe. Already the present arsenal of nuclear weapons in Europe are referred to by the military as "higher yield...dirty...unsafe"; because they would result in greater "collateral damage" (killing people and destroying property in the vicinity of use), it is feared that the U.S. might be inhibited from using them.

But in fact the present weapons are more than adequate. The United States has already deployed some 1,500 nuclear warheads in West Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Greece and Turkey for use with the new Lance missile and eight-inch artillery guns. In addition, it has deployed thousands of other nuclear weapons not slated for substitution with the neutron bombs—nuclear 155mm artillery shells, atomic demolition munitions, nuclear surface-to-air missiles, short-range Honest John missiles, and nuclear armed aircraft—that would also be used to respond to a Soviet attack on NATO territory. These weapons are backed up by

more than 20,000 longer-range and strategic weapons aboard U.S. Navy ships and in the United States.

The neutron bomb is touted as a "better" deterrent because it has a reduced radius of blast and creates less collateral damage. For that reason, strategists say, it is the perfect weapon to counter the Soviet's advantage in tank numbers in central Europe. Neutron bombs could be used with surgical precision to disable a massive Soviet attack without precipitating an escalation to general nuclear war.

But Dr. Herbert Scoville, President of the Arms Control Association and a former Department of Defense and CIA official, in a paper prepared for a recent conference on nuclear war in Europe, disputes the claim that neutron weapons have any advantages over fission weapons as far as their effects on tank operators. According to Scoville's calculations, while the neutron weapons would pro-

briefing that the decision was preferable to "unnecessary, lengthily prolonged, inconclusive debates."

But European security is, in theory at least, the collective responsibility of all of the members of NATO, and the tendency of the United States to decide what is best for Europe has been a major cause of discord within the alliance. The allies were not consulted beforehand on neutron bomb production, and Secretary Weinberger made it clear in his briefing that, though the weapons are to be deployed in the United States, they could be flown to Europe "in a few hours."

Many of the NATO governments that face strong anti-nuclear opposition at home have tried to extricate themselves from a difficult policy situation by claiming that the neutron bomb is a purely American concern. But two practical considerations belie that claim. One is that, as a matter of strategic planning,



duce less collateral damage, they would still damage structures and contaminate a large area when used in warfare in Europe.

Information given by the Army in Congressional hearings on a possible Soviet attack also contradict the claims of greater military effectiveness. In order to be strong enough to overwhelm NATO defenses, a blitzkrieg Soviet attack would have to muster some 2,200 tanks and 2,200 armored vehicles along a 40-to-50 kilometer front. Army doctrine calls for "packages" of nuclear weapons to be used in such an attack scenario. The fact that large numbers of bombs—whether regular fission or neutron—would be needed to respond over such a large area nullifies the supposed reduction in collateral damage that may exist for a single bomb.

The military's claim that the neutron bomb is a "defensive" weapon is absurd. Like other nuclear devices, it would kill millions of civilians in densely populated Europe if any of the Pentagon's scenarios came to pass. Secretary Weinberger's assurances that the weapon "is not as important for [the Soviets] to have...as it is for us" directly contradicts his own claims that the neutron bomb "enables infantry to fight closely behind it"—obviously an advantage for either side. President Brezhnev already stated in 1978 that the Soviet Union had tested a neutron weapon. The possibility of two opposing military powers having this weapon, which they believe could be used with fewer ramifications than conventional nuclear weapons, increases the likelihood of its use and lowers the threshold of nuclear warfare.

Dodging the issue.

The Reagan administration's decision to go ahead with the neutron bomb specifies that the new weapons will be deployed in the United States and not in Europe, where they are supposedly needed. This concession is powerful testimony to the influence of a growing anti-nuclear movement in Europe. Though the administration has been contrasting its decisive action on the bomb with Carter's deferral of the issue in 1978, the crucial issue of deployment has still been avoided. Secretary Weinberger, who has been openly disdainful of European misgivings about the weapon, stated in his Pentagon press

the weapons are intended for Europe. The other is that these weapons are meant for actual use by the military forces of the NATO countries, all of which now use either the eight-inch howitzers of Lance missiles armed with U.S. nuclear warheads that the neutron bombs would eventually replace.

Even if one accepts the technical point that Reagan has only decided to produce and stockpile the neutron bomb and not deploy it, it is simply a matter of time before American pressures mount for its movement to Europe. If the military situation is as the Pentagon portrays it, having the neutron bomb in the United States for "deterrence" makes no sense.

The Reagan administration's handling of the neutron decision is the first indication to the Europeans of its attitude about collective decision-making. Weinberger's statement that there was "no 'European veto' on this action and his snipe at West Germany for recently reducing its military expenditures reflects the Reagan clan's penchant for military unilateralism: a tendency to make independent decisions based on American perceptions of the military situation and the belief that other countries lack the will to make sacrifices, cannot be trusted to carry out their commitments and should not be counted on by the United States.

One of the major points of the anti-nuclear movement in Europe is that the security of Europe is out of their control. The neutron decision, pointedly made by the United States without consulting European governments, can only serve to strengthen that movement. It also legitimizes earlier arguments against the deployment of new long-range weapons approved by NATO in December 1979. That decision and opposition to it has been the major catalyst for the European Nuclear Disarmament movement. Embattled NATO governments are trying to justify the basing of those new weapons on grounds of "deterrence" and safety. Now Secretary Weinberger refers to the neutron bomb in the same way, and European governments are faced with the choice of either accepting the new American line or watching both decisions unravel.

William M. Arkin is a Fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C.

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THE SOUTH

State labor leader goes on trial in an anti-union climate

By Mark I. Pinsky

DURHAM, N.C.

THE ADVERTISEMENT THAT APPEARED simultaneously last month in issues of *Fortune*, *Forbes*, and *Business Week* was nearly breathless in its appeal to companies now contemplating a move to the Sun Belt.

"North Carolina," it boasts, "has some of the most competitive wage rates in the country. And the work stoppage rate here is one of the lowest on record anywhere."

The state's worker's compensation rate is also the lowest in the country, the ad proudly proclaims, and "you can still hire the kind of people that made America great."

A more concise translation of the advertisement, which was prepared and paid for by the state Commerce Department, might read this way: North Carolina ranks 49th among the states in average hourly industrial wages, 50th in percentage of unionized workers and has the most restrictive worker's compensation law in the country, written in 1931 and taken almost word for word from a 19th century British statute.

The business climate is especially favorable these days, with the head of the state AFL-CIO, Wilbur Hobby, about to go on trial in federal court in Raleigh, N.C., on fraud and conspiracy charges growing out of the alleged misuse of CETA funds two years ago.

Hobby's trials—in and out of court—offer an instructive example of why organized labor in North Carolina is in such a fix.

Hobby's Defense Fund charges that he is the target of selective political prosecution based on "vague," "flimsy" charges generated by a mass of unfavorable and misleading publicity. Hobby, they say, "is not on trial for breaking the law, but because he has consistently... championed the cause of workers, minorities, women and the poor."

Since 1976, the Fund and Hobby's attorneys point out, there were 50 instances of CETA contracts in this judicial district where audits indicated alleged overcharges of more than \$35,000. Yet in only this instance have such charges resulted in a federal prosecution.

A dubious scoop.

In the autumn of 1975, Hobby was the subject of a lengthy series of articles in the *Raleigh News & Observer*, which charged that the labor "boss" had received more than \$1 million in combined CETA grants to several small companies he controlled (a printing company called Precision Graphics and another called Precision Data) and one operated by the state AFL-CIO (a construction training program, called the Carolina Skill Advancement Center).

The *News & Observer* did not charge that there had been any theft or embezzlement, or that the CETA workers on the three projects—most of whom were young blacks and/or women—had not been properly trained. Nor did it deny that as a result most were hired for jobs in the private sector when their training was completed.

There was, however, a clear implication that the CETA contracts had been awarded to the AFL-CIO and Hobby's companies as a "political payoff" for labor's support of the Democratic slate in the 1976 election, and that there had been numerous instances of mismanagement, inefficiency and sloppy bookkeeping.

The information in the *News & Observer*

series was immediately picked up by the Congressional Club, a fund-raising machine created by Republican Sen. Jesse Helms and operated by his longtime associate, attorney Thomas Ellis. Slick, scurrilous radio and television spots—of a style soon to become familiar across the nation—were quickly produced. These attacked not only Hobby and organized labor, but also incumbent Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., a moderate young Democrat then gearing up his reelection campaign, and the entire CETA program.

(At the time, some thought it peculiar that the *News & Observer*, whose editorial position is generally liberal, Democratic and pro-labor, should end up making common cause with Helms and the Congressional Club, ultra-conservative in membership with two leaders who are longtime bitter enemies of the newspaper. By accident or design, the newspaper handed the Congressional Club a stick to beat Jim Hunt, whom it had in the past endorsed. Hobby said frankly that he was "stunned" by this development, while Ellis called a press conference—"a new experience for me," he said—in order "to commend the *News & Observer*." Politics making strange bedfellows, others recalled that this identical odd couple had during the Ford administration together brought about the collapse of Soul City, the federally backed "new town" in North Carolina planned by former civil rights leader Floyd B. McKissick. The same reporter wrote both series.)

But the ads were sufficiently negative and distorted that 11 television stations at first refused to run them, and a 12th dropped them after one airing. Tom Ellis became so frustrated that he said the Congressional Club would pay for equal time for Gov. Hunt to respond, but this offer was declined.

Jim Hunt is nothing if not a consummate politician. In his 1976 primary campaign he did solicit and receive the endorsement of Hobby and the state AFL-CIO. Thereafter he established a moderately progressive labor record (on paper, at least) by appointing a chair of the state Employment Security Commission who was, for the first time, not an anti-union man hand-picked by textile, tobacco and furniture interests. In the state legislature, the Hunt administration (admittedly under pressure from various groups, especially the Carolinas Brown Lung Association) supported speedier action and increased compensation for mill workers who were victims of brown lung, and endorsed a rewriting of the state's antiquated worker's compensation act.

Thanks to some blatant last minute counter-lobbying on the part of the state's secretary of commerce, a Hunt appointee, the rewriting died in committee. A proposed Center for Labor Education and Research at predominantly black North Carolina Central University in Durham, supported by the Hunt administration, was abandoned in the face of concerted GOP opposition. In short, the governor demonstrated that—unlike most of his predecessors—he could be dealt with on labor issues, even if he could not always deliver.

But in the autumn of 1979, Gov. Hunt wanted more than anything else to become the first chief executive in the state's history (thanks to a referendum and a constitutional amendment he shepherded through the legislature) to serve a second, successive term. Sen. Helms, perhaps the most outspoken foe of organized labor in the U.S. Senate, was at the same time assembling a Republican slate to challenge Hunt, all the elected members of his council of state and in-

cumbent U.S. Sen. Robert Morgan—all to be lavishly funded by Jesse's juggernaut, the Congressional Club. The Congressional Club, in turn, was under the deft, day-to-day direction of Tom Ellis, whose Raleigh law firm maintains as a lucrative sideline a union-busting consultation service.

For a state that was, until 1972, a one-party, Solid South Democratic stronghold, it was an unprecedented assault by the GOP, aimed at achieving a breakout from its perpetually minority status. The Hobby-CETA-Hunt issue, dropped in their laps by the dominant daily newspaper in eastern North Carolina, seemed like a godsend.

Profiles in expedience.

So it came to pass, in a move not calculated to earn him a chapter in *Profiles in Courage*, that Gov. Hunt left Wilbur Hobby to twist slowly in the wind. For an ambitious politician even then looking toward the electoral challenge of Sen. Helms in 1984, and a spot on the Democratic Party's national ticket or a cabinet position some time thereafter, the head of the state AFL-CIO had simply become a liability.

Throughout the late spring and early summer of this year, Hobby's attorneys attempted several legal maneuvers to slow, if not stop, the federal prosecution. All were unsuccessful. A challenge to the composition of the grand jury that handed down the initial indictment—charging that blacks, women and members of blue-collar socio-economic groups were disproportionately excluded—was rejected. And Judge W. Earl Britt summarily denied a subpoena request for the Congressional Club's mailing list for eastern North Carolina to be used to challenge individual members of the grand jury.

denied the motion and ordered the trial of Wilbur Hobby and three associates who are not labor officials to begin on Aug. 24.

(Ironically, the same day Judge Britt refused to move Hobby's trial to Richmond, a federal court of appeals, sitting in Richmond, ruled that Labor Department officials have a right to demand the identities of financial backers of the anti-union drive at J.P. Stevens textile plants in both Carolinas. Observers close to the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWL) are certain that lines from the two anti-union groups, "Stevens People" and "Friends of Freedom," will at the very least lead to Tom Ellis' Raleigh law firm, if not directly to the Congressional Club.)

In the course of his ordeal, Wilbur Hobby has been bloodied, but unbowed. At a fundraising breakfast for his defense this summer in Durham, he said, "I just want you to know that I haven't done anything wrong, unless it's to help poor people get jobs and get them off welfare." Although he has taken a temporary leave of absence from his AFL-CIO post until the outcome of his trial, Hobby has not given up his labor activ-

The Hobby case was a godsend to Jesse Helms' Congressional Club, which also attacked CETA.



The trials of Wilbur Hobby—in and out of court—show why organized labor in North Carolina is in such a fix.

In support of thier motion to move the trial to Richmond, Va., citing the extensive pre-trial publicity in North Carolina, Hobby's lawyers offered as proof a 300-phone-call opinion survey covering seven counties, conducted by a professor at N.C. State University, which found that 97 percent of those phoned knew who Hobby was, and 100 of the 300 already held a "firm opinion" that he was guilty of the charges. Judge Britt

ities or his militance. On Aug. 7, he and 20 textile workers joined a PATCO picket line at the same federal building in Raleigh where he will be tried. "Our country says it supports the Polish workers," Hobby told a reporter, "yet here at home it's denying its own employees the most basic right—to withhold their labor."

Mark I. Pinsky reports from the Southeast for Reuters and several publications.

PATCO

Continued from page 3

where the whole world came down on us. The second was on my 25th parachute jump, when the chute didn't open. And the third was when I had two planes coming together separated by only 100 feet and a quarter mile apart." Stories of ulcers, nervous breakdowns, jitters carried home and co-workers who simply could no longer take the job abound.

Controllers tend to be young men who thrive on challenge and take unabashed pride in "beating the giant" (checking out at Chicago's frantic O'Hare airport in record time, in their various "saves" of threatened aircraft, or in the daily roulette of "betting on the come" (gambling that several airplanes all headed toward each other as they come in for landing will hit the landing strip and not each other).

The daily camaraderie, often involv-

ing instantaneous coordination and trust of one's colleagues, reinforces their sense of being a "special breed of people." Since four-fifths of them came into their jobs through the military, and many of those now on the job served in Vietnam, they have an additional sense of commonality. All that contributes to a natural solidarity that was nurtured in recent years by their growing sense of frustration over abuse by their supervisors, increasing work loads with insufficient staffing, faulty equipment that would go on the blink—suddenly leaving them with a darkened radar screen with a couple dozen planes floating in a narrow air space, and continual repudiation of their demands by the Federal Aviation Administration and Congress, leaving them far behind counterparts in other countries. (PATCO figures show U.S. controllers with far fewer benefits, vacation time, sick days and career protection than controllers in other capitalist countries. Most important, whereas U.S. controllers work 40-hour weeks, the work week is much less elsewhere—32 hours in France, 29 at Eurocontrol, 34 in Canada, 36 in Norway

or 33 in West Germany.)

Eventually they felt they had no choice. "It was either go on an illegal strike and get fired," Dave Rambeau, 35, said, "or stay there under the harassment of the FAA and get fired for union activity or else never make it to retirement." Like many other controllers, he considers even the firings and threats he now suffers to be not much worse than staying on the job under previous conditions. And like many others, he is confident—confident that the system needs the experienced controllers that walked out, confident that he can find other work, as he has already.

Controllers at the PATCO hall near the Denver airport, a small office with equipment to monitor the control tower and prove how inexperienced, overworked controllers were unable to handle necessary procedures and with a "Don't Tread on Me" flag tacked to the wall, emphasized that they had not struck lightly.

The FAA, under the direction of Lynn Helms, a former Piper Aircraft executive who had broken a union at his company, flatly rejected negotiation on most PAT-

CO demands. Government negotiators also pulled the two better, but still unsatisfactory, contracts off the table at the last minute in late June when they discovered that PATCO did not have strike support of 80 percent of the entire bargaining unit (including non-controllers and non-union controllers) as their rules required.

The no strike clause.

But what about the controllers' pledge not to strike? What about the government's broken promises and contracts? Conant replied, ticking off a few earlier defaults by the FAA and Congress: no adequate retirement plan, no funding for the promised training for a second career, no up-to-date equipment, short staffing and contract violations such as refusing to pay for sick leave or forcing retirement for medical reasons but denying medical retirement pay. Besides, he added, without the right to strike, a union is reduced to begging and can't really bargain.

Although most of the controllers at the Denver airport voted for Reagan, on the basis of a pledge the union received from Reagan's top campaign staff to treat controllers fairly, only a few would have supported him otherwise, they said. Most seemed not to be political, but there are scattered sympathies for conservative positions. The strike has changed their view not only of Reagan but also of the United States.

"Reagan is taking on unionism," Conant said. "He has taken on PATCO number one. Then the rest are ducks in a row." Rambeau figures that the direct and indirect costs of the strike to the economy run close to \$100 million a day. Firing all the controllers will cost the government \$200 million for retirement and vacation pay, plus millions more in legal fees and other efforts to break the strike. The initial academic training of each new controller (3,000 to start, but obviously more if PATCO members don't return) is \$175,000, plus additional on-the-job training costs. "If you add all these things together," he said, "it's at least \$3.5 billion or so. Our ideal contract would have cost \$575 million. So it is simply blatant union-busting."

Most of the controllers thought of themselves as solid patriots and ordinary scrupulously law-abiding folks. "I'm married, with one child, one dog and one cat," Rambeau said. "I'm just Joe American." But their view of America is changing. "I found out that in the U.S. people are not as free as they thought," Vietnam vet Carl Tafoya, 34, said. "Rights can be taken away without due process. The media is not as even-handed as we thought: it's just big business. The government will say anything to win. I'd question anything they say now."

One placard at PATCO headquarters reflected the same sentiments: The government deceived us about Vietnam, about Watergate, about Rocky Flats (the nuclear weapons plan near Denver), about Three Mile Island, the sign read. The government is deceiving you about flight safety.

"There's something wrong with America when a man on strike is taken to prison in shackles," Conant said. "There's something wrong when people with \$30,000-a-year jobs risk those jobs to go on strike. I love America, but if they tear down the unions, you might as well move to Russia. Here's the same man who wants to get government out of our personal business destroying our union. It seems like a contradiction."

Although there was gratitude for gestures of support from the labor movement, there was also an undercurrent of disappointment that unions in critical positions—such as the pilots or machinists—had not done more. But most controllers expected to go it alone and rely on what they regard as their indispensable talent and experience as craft, or professional, workers to win their demands.

"Whether I work in another radar room or not, I've won," Fahey said. "The air traffic control situation in America will not be the same for years. It will not have the professionalism we have to offer. Based on conditions at Stapleton airport, I was forced into a situation which is ultimately better for me and my family. I have won because I met a crossroads in my life."

Zolton Ferency

the democratic

candidate for
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Michigan State News

"...the Michigan State University criminal justice professor has traditionally been the left's most articulate spokesman on issues of economic democracy, racism, sexism, the environment and peace."

Lansing State Journal

"Mr. Ferency is not afraid to be controversial. He publicly refers to himself as a democratic socialist and thinks the state should get into business in a big way, competing with private industry in an effort to restore the fiscal health of Michigan."

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IN THE WORLD

EUROPE



"Renovators" such as Manuel Azcarate (left) are impatient with both the "official" Eurocommunism of party secretary Santiago Carrillo (right) and the party's veneration of old-guard leadership from the days of the Civil War (inset).

Spanish party debates "renovation"

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

DEMOCRACY HAS NOT brought happiness and success to Eurocommunism. The Spanish parties that have gone farthest in democratizing—the Basque and especially the Basque—are still vetoed from taking part in government, while assailed by doubts about their political identity and usefulness.

The Spanish Communist Party (PCE), Fernando Claudin wrote recently, seems to be victim of a "flood of ingratitude on the part of history." Neither its bravery in the underground opposition to Franco, nor its responsible contribution to democratic transition, nor even its bold championing of Eurocommunism has been rewarded by the voters, who have preferred the Socialist Party (PSOE) by a wide margin. Except for Catalonia, where Communists get about 20 percent, the PCE has got only about 7 percent of the Spanish vote, and polls warn of a further drop to about 5 percent. The membership that swelled to more than 200,000 after the party was legalized four years ago is officially down to 100,000. The Communist-led unions, the *Comisiones Obreras*, which waged the heroic labor battles against the Franco dictatorship, are rapidly being overtaken by the Socialist-led UGT.

"Faced with the spectacular success of the French Socialist Party," Claudin wrote, "some Spanish Eurocommunists are indeed beginning to ask themselves: What is the use of the Communist Parties?"

Jordi Borja of the Catalan Communist Party has described the permanent dilemma facing the PCE. Its "sense of responsibility," its moderation, is necessary for its own survival and that of Spanish democracy, but cannot overcome the military right's prejudice. Anything resembling the Popular Front would be the red flag to the bull setting off a military takeover and suppression.

The question then arises whether the PCE serves any practical purpose other than to block the progress of the PSOE.

However, Borja remarks, the PSOE is even more loosely rooted in Spanish society. The disappearance of the PCE would not at all strengthen the precarious Spanish left. Thus some in the PCE

envision a three-stage evolution:

First, coalition government of the center right (UCD) and the PSOE, supported from the outside by the PCE, to strengthen democracy and legitimize the left.

Next, an electoral and programmatic alliance between the PCE and the PSOE to offer a real left alternative.

Finally, a political and organizational merger of communists and socialists in a new party "reunifying the two historic currents of the working class and socialist movement, which separately tend to neutralize each other." Other left wing forces like ecologists, autonomists and far left groups would remain independent, offering fresh solutions to specific problems.

Thus the party's evolution and very *raison d'être* were the basic issues underlying the publicly-waged political battles at the PCE's 10th congress in Madrid at the end of July. For the vast majority, the issue of Eurocommunism was settled for good at the 9th congress in April 1978. The pro-Soviet remnant, derisively dubbed "Afghans," was never able to muster more than about 6 percent of the vote. The more serious challenge to secretary general Santiago Carrillo's "official Eurocommunist" position came from the "renovator Eurocommunist" current, whose best-known exponent is the PCE's international spokesman Manuel Azcarate.

The "renovators" wanted to speed up democratization of the party organization, in particular by giving formal status to minority currents and allowing them their proportional share of leadership positions. The renovators include many young intellectuals impatient to replace the old "charismatic" Civil War veterans who returned from exile after Franco's death. The renovators feel the old guard is slow in adapting to a changed society. Thus Luis Larroque criticized the PCE for "maintaining the structures of an exclusively worker party," which prevent it from growing. Renovators point to the workerism of the French Communist Party as the horrible example to be avoided.

Defending Carrillo's "official Eurocommunist" position, Simon Sanchez Montero retorted that "our party can scarcely hope to take root in the government administration with things as they are, and it cannot spread throughout society without a solid organizational struc-

ture, which is precisely what the renovators are trying to destroy."

All set after its legalization to play its double role as "party of struggle and government," with emphasis on the latter, the PCE neglected to get involved in the new extra-governmental movements, such as ecology, feminism and sexual liberation. Thus, according to the renovators, it risks remaining outside the most lively social struggles. And the abortive military *golpe* last Feb. 23 put an end to any hopes for government participation in the foreseeable future.

Two important intellectual leaders of the renovator current, Ramon Tames and Eugenio Triana, have quit the PCE since the *golpe*.

Roberto Lortxundi, representative from the Basque country, where the PCE is almost nonexistent, criticized the PCE for not demanding greater parliamentary checks on application of the anti-terrorist law, to keep it from being used to cover torture and other abuse of human rights.

In his four-hour report on July 28, Carrillo attacked "disintegrating tendencies" in the PCE. He said formal currents were contrary to the party's "vanguard" role and would make it ungovernable. It's all very well, he argued, for communist parties in one-party states to demand formalized currents as that is the only way to make up for the lack of pluralism, "but in Spain there are other parties to join."

"The PCE is an historic necessity," Carrillo insisted. This is no longer a self-evident truth to many Spanish Communists, at a time when, as Carrillo also said, socialist Francois Mitterrand is "the most important leader of the European left today."

Carrillo sharply criticized Spanish socialist leaders, while offering to meet with the PSOE to create a new political organization allowing Communists and Socialists to retain their identity. The PSOE error, according to Carrillo, was to seek the centrist bourgeois vote under the illusion that it could govern alone. The Feb. 23 *golpe* proved this was impossible, as the PCE had said all along, and that the first stage toward left government must be the "democratic concentration" policy of a UCD-PSOE coalition (which the UCD, however, has so far refused).

Carrillo defended the old "charismatic" leaders who had proved themselves in historic battles against fascism.

"Those who speak against leaders generally aspire to be leaders themselves," he observed, expressing willingness to promote renovators who offered guarantees of loyalty. "It sets a bad example when a leader abandons the party and we must see to it that their selection provides us with a minimum of such surprises," he said, in an obvious allusion to his erstwhile rivals Tames and Triana.

Finally, the renovators got only 12 out of 105 seats on the Central Committee, although they represented more than a fourth of the party at the congress.

Carrillo said the party apparatus was too weak rather than too strong. He said it had been a mistake to eliminate the party office in charge of union affairs out of fear that the party might use the unions as a "transmission belt." The unions, incidentally, are the stronghold of the remaining pro-Soviet communists.

The *golpe* lent fuel to various conflicting arguments. In rejecting renovator demands, Carrillo said he wasn't trying to scare anybody, "but we are watching a process of decomposition of the democratic parties precisely when the ultra-right is putting itself back together, and thus we are contributing to the possibility of another *golpe*."

Finally, Carrillo's report was approved by 689 votes, or 67.5 percent of the 1,019 delegates. However, his majority included Catalans who disagree with him on many points but decided he was the lesser evil in the face of a strong "Afghan" challenge within their own PSUC, which earlier this year first dropped and then reclaimed its adherence to "Eurocommunism."

All this heated debate was open to the press, which could see for itself that the internal operation of the PCE is every bit as democratic as other political parties, if not more so, even if a substantial part of its membership is still far from satisfied. The biggest uproar came when "officialist" Vicente Cazorra attacked as "social democratic" the amendment introduced by Basque renovator Sigfrido Domingo to recognize both currents and a federal structure taking into account Spain's "distinct peoples." Domingo also called for democratization and rejuvenation of the party. The amendment was defeated by 651 to 273, with 133 abstentions, mostly from the PSUC. But the democratization of the PCE is already so far advanced that the debate is bound to continue.

By Mervyn Jones

L O N D O N

FEW PRIME MINISTERS CAN have been so grateful for the traditional August holiday as Margaret Thatcher in 1981. Her government is in every kind of trouble, and she personally is held to blame by the critics—many of them, nowadays, in her own Conservative Party.

You wouldn't think it to look at her, however. All who meet her report that she's still a determined and resilient woman, upheld by an unbroken belief that she can't be wrong. Maintaining her reputation as a workaholic, she took only one week's holiday and devoted most of it to visiting historic sites and walking around farms.

In the modern world, a government is judged primarily by its record in sustaining the economy, and three yardsticks are employed: growth, employment, inflation. Thatcher's report card would read: "Growth, very poor. Employment, appalling. Inflation, mediocre." Britain's gross national product registered a 3 percent decline in the past year and is hovering around the 1970 level, with businesses and plants closing down every week and surveys of opinion among industrialists showing a strongly pessimistic outlook.

Unemployment is heading relentlessly for the dreaded figure of three million. There will soon be more men and women out of work than ever before in British history. (The three-million mark was passed briefly at the end of 1931.) True, the meaningful figure for economists is the percentage of the labor force; it went over 20 percent in the Great Depression and is now about 12 percent. But the absolute figure of three million is what hits the headlines and makes the impact. Besides, forecasters whom I've questioned see no reason why, if Thatcherite policies aren't reversed, it shouldn't rise to four or even five million.

Inflation, measured at an annual rate, was running at 9 percent when Thatcher entered Downing Street. The dominant theme in Thatcher's monetarist philosophy is that inflation is the main enemy, and her medicine for it must be taken regardless of painful side-effects. Only when inflation is reduced, she repeatedly declares, will the economy revive and unemployment fall. But inflation today is running at 11 percent—and a significant part of it must be ascribed to high indirect taxation. The value-added tax (a levy on all goods and services) has been almost doubled by this government, and the 1981 budget put a startling 20 pence (40 cents) on a gallon of gas.

When Thatcher took office, she announced that the traditional Retail Price Index (RPI) gave a misleading picture of trends in living standards, and introduced a Tax and Prices Index (TPI) that would reflect the benefits of tax cuts. (Direct taxation was in fact reduced in 1979, but further reductions haven't materialized.) Opposition leaders denounced the TPI as a dodge to conceal the true inflation rate. Now, ironically, the TPI makes things look worse than the RPI.

Recent Tory losses.

A marked feature of the 1979 election was the unbalanced nature of the Tory victory, seen geographically. There was a heavy swing to the Tories in the south, a much slighter swing in the industrial north, and actually a swing to Labour in Scotland. Thatcher, whose own constituency is a pleasant London suburb, is now seen increasingly as remote from, and incapable of understanding, the realities of life to the north.

As an opposition leader, Thatcher broke with the traditional convention that party leaders don't campaign in by-elections. But as prime minister, she failed to put in an appearance during the Warrington by-election held on July 16. The grimy north-country town, with its smelly chemical plants and its rows of pre-1914 brick houses, was clearly not a place where she would be welcome.

The dramatic success of the new Social-Democrat Party candidate, former prominent Labourite Roy Jenkins, was certainly bad news for the Labour Party. Instead of making headway, Labour lost



ENGLAND

Thatcher discovers no one loves a loser

By-election tallies, projected nationwide, would return just one Tory to the Commons.

25 percent of its 1979 voters. But the Tories lost 75 percent of theirs, dropping from a poll of 10,000 to a pitiable 2,000.

Television viewers who stayed up for the count saw a computer projection that made them rub their eyes. If the turnover of votes at Warrington were repeated nation-wide in a general election, there would be a Social Democrat/Liberal government, a Labour opposition of respectable size—and precisely one Tory member of the House of Commons. The computer didn't say who the lone survivor would be, but it wouldn't be Thatcher.

Of course, this is an abstract mathematical exercise. But political history shows that general elections do repeat, albeit in modified form, the trends heralded by mid-term by-elections. Many, many Tories are now resigned to losing power when the day of reckoning comes. And it's by no means impossible that the Conservative Party will be the third party in the Commons and will cease to be the official opposition, for the first time in its history.

Riot response.

Meanwhile, shopkeepers were sweeping up broken glass after the riots in Liverpool and Manchester. Each of these cities, incidentally, is within 20 miles of Warrington. The Tory candidate in the by-election waged a fierce law-and-order campaign, even demanding that nine-year-old children should be subject to the same punishments as adults, but it did not save him.

Thatcher's own response to the riots was insensitive to the verge of brutality.

She flatly denied that unemployment and poverty had anything to do with the outbreak, and confined herself to unqualified praise and support for the police. In the ensuing days, even Tory newspapers ran eyewitness stories showing that, in Liverpool at least, the police had lost their heads and been guilty of what can only be called atrocities.

To everyone but Thatcher, the glaring fact about the riots was their predictability. Press and television had been exploring the depressed conditions in the run-down districts of Liverpool for years. The *Guardian* was able to reprint a January 1981 feature that it had headlined "A Time-Bomb on Merseyside." My own files for 1976 include a report on Manchester's Moss Side ghetto that mentions high unemployment, total alienation from authority and general hatred of the police.

When the bombs duly went off, Tories with their ears to the ground begged the Prime Minister to repair the damage caused by her first reaction. She visited

Liverpool (pursued by angry residents and under heavy police protection) and looked suitably concerned by what she saw. She then instructed Michael Heseltine, who holds the cabinet post of Secretary for the Environment, to spend two weeks in the city and prepare a full report, covering social conditions as well as the breakdown of law and order. The Heseltine mission was a qualified success; except for militant black groups, most people talked to him and he came up with some small-scale proposals for new housing and aid for cooperative workshops.

Heseltine, however, has been the one slashing housing and welfare projects all over the country. He is on collision course with city councils—largely Labour since the Party's sweeping gains in the May elections—whom he accuses of over-spending. He is obliged to implement Thatcher's economic policy, of which a major aim is a reduction in public expenditure.

That is the aim—but another Thatcher failure is that public expenditure has steadily increased. Those three million unemployed receive social security, and have ceased to pay taxes on the wages they no longer earn. Nationalized industries—steel, the railways, the hopelessly unprofitable British Leyland automobile combine, and now British Airways—make heavy calls on the public purse for subsidies.

Sir Geoffrey Howe, the unimpressive Chancellor of the Exchequer (known ever since his appointment as Sir Geoffrey Who?), is the man who carries the can. He has made himself ridiculous by announcing that the worst of the recession is over, a claim contradicted by other senior ministers, not to speak of economists and businessmen. It's quite possible that Thatcher will throw Howe to the wolves this fall, and she has certainly been urged to do so.

The difficulty is that Howe is the one solid supporter on whom Thatcher can count. She is now, all political correspondents agree, in a minority in her own cabinet. (Obviously, the only people who can tell the journalists are cabinet members, and they do.) Of course, the cabinet doesn't function by taking votes, and the prime minister has an authority only marginally less than that of an American president. Still, Thatcher's position is uncomfortable.

Just before the summer break began, Lord Thorneycroft, a 72-year-old elder statesman and chair of the Conservative Party, declared in an interview for publication that the government would have to change its policies if there were to be any hope of economic recovery. Considering what his job is, this is almost equal to hearing from the Pope that God is going about things the wrong way. Within a week, Francis Pym, Leader of the House (in American parlance, Majority Leader) made a public speech saying the same thing. In the British system, Pym's post entails membership in the Cabinet; he was recently shifted from being secretary for defense. He is a very senior figure in the Tory hierarchy, and might well become prime minister if anything happened to Thatcher.

So, will anything happen to Thatcher? Naturally, the thought has occurred to a number of Tories that they might check the slide to disaster if they got a new prime minister. It should be remembered that her original election as party leader was something of an accident, and that getting herself personally liked is not among her qualities. And, given the traditional outlook of Tory stalwarts, the fact that she's a woman further weakens her position.

On the other hand, getting rid of a prime minister who doesn't want to go is among the most difficult of political operations. The last time the Tories did it was in 1940—and that was when Nazi tanks were rolling into Belgium. And Neville Chamberlain was an old, sick man. Thatcher is neither old nor sick, and is certainly a fighter.

One of our shrewdest political correspondents, Alan Watkins of the *Observer*, wrote recently that an effective revolt against Thatcher is still unlikely, but is a sufficiently serious possibility to be worth discussing. That seems to be about the right judgment.

Mervyn Jones writes for the *New Statesman* and is *In These Times*' former British correspondent.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Vietnam still fights for independence

By Chris Mullin

HANOI

ON AN EARLIER VISIT TO VIETNAM, I asked my guide if I could travel south from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City by train instead of by plane. He threw up his hands in amazement: "Out of the question, absolutely impossible. No foreigners are allowed on Vietnamese trains."

A day later I raised the subject with the head of the press section at the foreign ministry. "Unfortunately," he said, "conditions on Vietnamese trains are far too bad for foreigners."

"No problem," I replied. "I've traveled on trains in India and nothing could be worse than that."

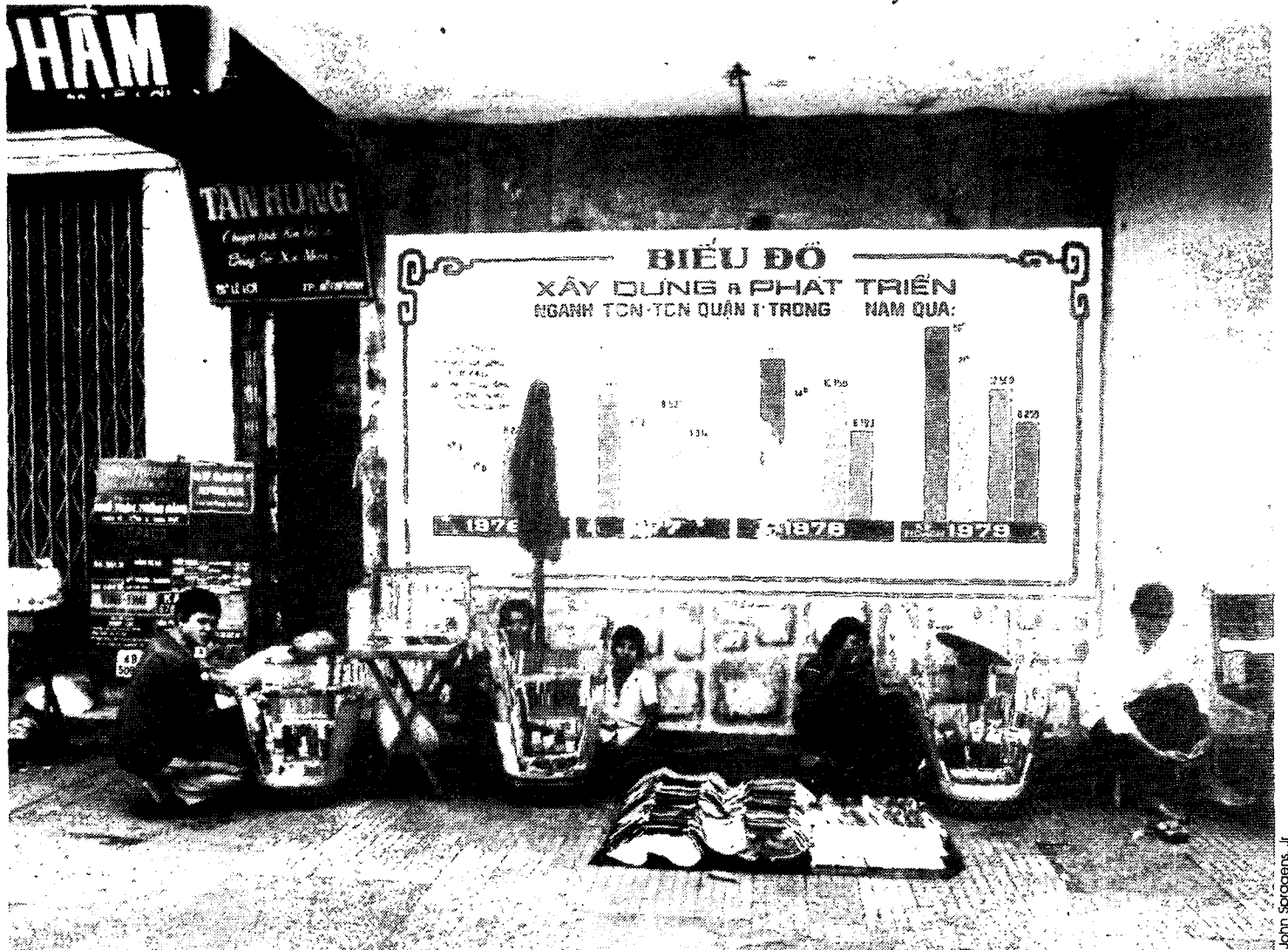
On the contrary, he assured me, he too had traveled on trains in India and conditions on Vietnamese trains were even worse.

Undaunted, I raised the matter with the foreign minister, Mr. Nguyen Co Thach, an urbane and worldly-wise man well versed in the eccentricities of foreigners. Mr. Thach saw no reason why I shouldn't have a railway ticket, but added ominously that he could see there might be objections from some quarters. There and then he sat down and wrote a note to the appropriate authorities. When the reply came back the next day, Mr. Thach had been overruled.

There are very few countries in the world where it is necessary to go to the foreign minister in pursuit of a railway ticket. There are even fewer where not even the influence of the foreign minister is sufficient to obtain a ticket.

I cite this trivial incident only to illustrate a larger point: namely, that six years after the end of the war Vietnam stands at the crossroads between Stalinism and socialism. The next few years will determine whether it is to go down the road already taken by most Soviet bloc countries and degenerate into an authoritarian, bureaucratic and unpopular regime or whether it will develop into a humane, tolerant form of socialism that operates with the consent of the people.

In Vietnam today, there is abundant



Signs of the times: a Saigon billboard charts the growth of small industries since 1976, while on the column to the right the slogan reads, "Everything for production, everything to build socialism."

responsibility. On the other hand, there are flourishing worker cooperatives that have been allowed to develop unhindered by dogma or red tape, in which production and wages have grown steadily to the benefit of both the state and the individual.

On the one hand, control over most information is in the hands of the state, while on the other, there exists in Saigon a prosperous independent newspaper called *Tin Sang*—unique in the communist world.

Worst of both worlds.

Five years after formal reunification, the economies of the north and the south remain largely unintegrated. In the north all farmers are members of cooperatives and are obliged to sell most of their production to the state at fixed prices. Most people in the northern cities are inside the official ration system and are able to buy basic commodities at subsidized prices. Wages are extremely low and prices extremely high. Everyone is poor, but no one starves.

In the south, most farmers continue to sell their produce on the free market, and most city dwellers—except for government employees—remain outside the ration system. Some people are rich, some starve.

The northern economy is characterized by paralytic bureaucracy, the economy in the south by corruption and an enormous black market. Fears that the corruption would spread north and the bureaucracy would spread south have been largely realized.

And if the history of the Soviet Union, China and the Eastern bloc is anything to go by, this corruption will in due course spread into the Communist Party itself. There will be special shops for cadres, special schools for their children and they will have the best housing.

It has not happened yet—at least not to any great extent—because the war is still so close. In a period of revolution a Communist Party tends to attract only the best people—after all, they are risking their lives. After a revolution, many join because they see Party membership as a passport to privilege and a good job.

After the liberation of the south, the Vietnamese Party launched a major recruiting drive to replace the thousands of

members who died in the war. Many of the new recruits turned out to be corrupt, and lately a determined effort has been made to clean up the Party in the south. But that effort can only succeed in a society that concentrates less power in the hands of officials, where there are fewer petty regulations (such as permits to travel from one province to another) that present opportunities for bribery and where officials are properly accountable for their power.

One imagines that Vietnamese leaders must be haunted by the specter of Poland. The people of North Vietnam have known nothing but a life of struggle—against the French, the Americans and the Chinese as well as the rain, the sun and the wind. And still the shops in Hanoi are bare, prices continue to rise, the proportion of rice in the basic 13-kilo-a-month ration keeps falling and there is no end in sight. In the past the Vietnamese

have borne all this with dignity and stoicism, but now even foreigners can hear the complaining. "This is the worst year since the war," said one woman in Hanoi who had told me last year, "We must fight."

In the factories low wages and poor diet are reflected in low morale and chronic absenteeism. Foreign technicians complain that they can only get half a day's work out of their Vietnamese counterparts. The harbor at Haiphong—Vietnam's number one port—is clogged so badly that up to 30 percent of the cargo fails to reach its destination; ships that cannot afford to pay bribes can take as much as a year to unload.

Poorly trained northern cadres have been placed in charge of southern factories and state farms—often with disastrous results. And attempts to introduce agricultural cooperatives in the south and to wipe out the black market

Continued on page 22



Half of all government spending remains tied down in the armed forces.

evidence to support both possibilities. On the one hand, there is an over-powerful and suspicious security service doing its best to prevent all but the most superficial contact between foreigners and Vietnamese citizens. On the other hand, there are trade and tourist departments desperate to develop contacts with the outside world and rescue Vietnam's ailing economy.

On the one hand, there are state enterprises choked by stifling bureaucracy and managers unable or unwilling to take

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FIFTH GENERATION, FIRST WAVE

Black independent film is taking off again, and black audiences are enthusiastic. Filmmakers are trying to make sure it stays that way this time.

BY PAT AUFDERHEIDE

BLACK

Independent cinema, is back, after years of financial draught and political chill that nearly withered an earlier independent movement. A film festival held on Chicago's black South Side in June not only showcased recent efforts, but made a dramatic case for the importance of such films within American black communities.

The films were heralded, ironically, in Europe, where a first-feature black-and-white film *Killer of Sheep* won a critics' prize at the latest Berlin Film Festival. Warrington Hudlin, filmmaker and founder of the Black Filmmakers Foun-

hard it is to be black in America, how much we suffer, how everyone lives in the ghetto. They don't allow us to express ourselves as full human beings."

But the imprint of European approval means that black filmmakers may be able to establish a more secure relationship with American black audiences than has been possible up till now.

Like most independent films, these avoid lowest-common-denominator entertainment formulas. Their themes and messages vary widely, from the anguish of being unemployed to celebration of black folk traditions. Styles vary widely as well, from the cinema verite of a Hudlin documentary to stagey re-enactment chosen by Woodie King, Jr., to a silent movie mode that highlights filmmaker Charles Lane's comic abilities, to the semi-gloss of a fiction subject by Roy Campanella, Jr.

This new wave has its technical origins in universities and film schools. The filmmakers tend to be young and hip, not only to social issues but to the arcane details of grant applications and presale contracts. In fact if this time black independents get a chance to develop their skills it may be because of such contracts. European TV in particular has money for politically or socially informed subject matter. Three black filmmakers whose work was included in this festival—Hudlin, Charles Burnett and King, Jr.—have partial financing for current projects from Dutch or German TV.

But the strength of this cinema can't come from Europe, and everyone knows it. It'll take the commitment of black audiences to a non-Hollywood kind of black film to make the movement grow. Most filmmakers have confidence that the audience is there, and Hudlin drew some evidence from a commercial

"My experience with black audiences," said Roy Campanella, Jr., whose semi-autobiographical feature about a filmmaker's difficulties in making a social issue film was also shown at the festival, "is that they're more committed to an artist's work than a general audience is. They want more than just to be lulled."

The Chicago festival, organized by Chicago multimedia producer Andrea Baily with a wide-reaching group of black Chicago artists, was proof of the link between filmmakers and the black community. Held in a high school auditorium packed with families on opening night, the event included more during its six days than film. The festival sponsored awards for children who designed posters; special recognition for Jim Taylor, a black filmmaker who founded a training center for independent filmmakers, Community Film Workshop; technical seminars; and meet-the-filmmaker panels and discussions. It was promoted through churches and community groups, and was something of a surprise for audience as well as filmmakers.

"I came out of a sense of duty," said one well-dressed ticket holder. "I never expected to enjoy it so much, or to find such high quality."

FEATURE

film *Killer of Sheep* proved the importance of relationship between film and audience. Charles Burnett's feature is slow paced, with extremely low production



KILLER OF SHEEP creates authentic scenes of domestic life.



Warrington Hudlin makes cinema verite with a sense of humor.



Ayoka Chenzira (right) wanted to preserve Syvilla Fort's (left) legacy.

dation, had brought a package of recent black independent films to that festival, and the package toured to enthusiastic response in northern Europe before being sent to Chicago.

Why did it take a sea change to get these films a stamp of approval? Hudlin said, "In practice black American culture—music, drama, language, style—dominates the popular culture of both the U.S. and Europe. The difference is that white Americans embrace the culture but deny black authorship."

And he could be right, although that doesn't mean Europeans don't bring their own prejudices to the subject. Ayoka Chenzira, filmmaker and dancer, said, "The black American films they like in Europe are the ones that show how

phenomenon.

"Look at *Bustin' Loose*," he told an attentive audience. "Hollywood fascinates me because they want to make money, but on the other hand there's racism. This was Pryor's project and they didn't want it to do well, because it would make Pryor into a power and set a precedent. They want to be able to say, 'Look Richard, stick with us and you make money. Do your own thing and you lose money.'"

"They show their displeasure by not putting ad money behind a project. So *Bustin' Loose* opened with print ads in major cities only the day before. But—enter the black audience. In ten days the film did \$12 million of business—amazing!"

values, meandering episodically through a few days in the life of a black family in a housing project neighborhood. The father has a mindkilling job at a meat plant, the mother tries to piece together a home life, the daughter invents out of the most ordinary stuff of everyday a rich fantasy life. The men go on an expedition to buy a cheap car engine, the family tries to go on an outing in the country.

In spite of construction so loose most people did not know the film had ended when it did, audience reaction at key moments was intense. At one point the husband blows up at a friend who calls him poor. "I give things to the Salvation Army," he splutters. "You can't do that if you're poor." There was an explosion of delight and sympathy in the audience.

Scenes of the daughter playing alone evoked a poignant response and tense, carefully-caught interchanges between children and adults when things went awry—for instance, the outing falls through because of car failure—recorded a tension-filled daily life rarely seen on TV or at the movies, as the audience's shock of recognition showed.

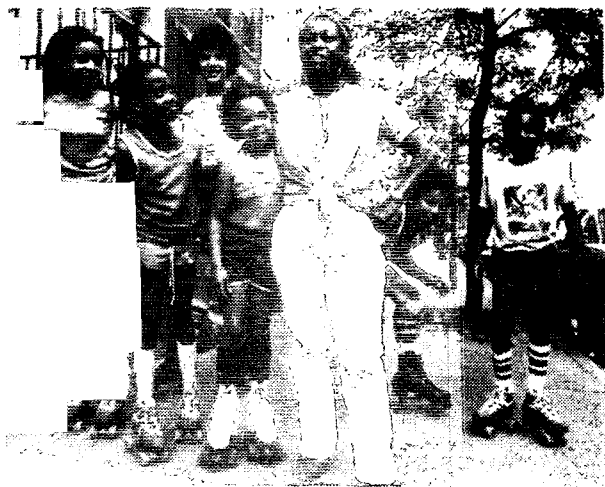
Documentaries gave this same confirmation of the human reality behind what are often cast only as social problems. Hudlin's *Street Corner Stories* is a good example. It's a discursive and, for the unattuned ear, often impenetrably thick, slice of daily dialogue at a New Haven corner store where chronically unemployed black men hang out. The filmmaker catches their blowhard bravado as much as the poignancy of their alienation. He doesn't have to moralize about injustice or self-destructive; he's got on film how these people survive the aimlessness imposed on them and what it costs them.

Street Corner Stories was a student film, like Hudlin's *Black at Yale*, which shaves with a sense of humor. *Yale* concerns a young black man who produced excellent school work there without being accepted. Hudlin doesn't stop with interviews and conversations that reveal the man's stubborn personality. He goes to other students, to advisors and to those street corner men to ask them what they think it means to be black at Yale. The reactions vary according to class and political experience. Once again, no lectures—no need for them.

THE

festival represented two wings of this emerging movement—one from the west coast-trained filmmakers, who have been more interested in fiction and narrative, and the other tapping the east coast traditional concern for the documentary. In both traditions work, often first films, was uneven.

For instance UCLA-based Larry Clark's *Passing Through* was an overlong and cardboard "political romance," but the opening sequence of visual effects combined with jazz music is an exciting experiment in visual jazz. *The Torture of Mothers*, Woodie King, Jr.'s recreation of a court case (the Harlem Six) using transcript material, looks awkwardly translated from stage mechanics to screen.



In *BUT THEN, SHE'S BETTY CARTER* the musician emerges without hype.

Chenizira, who made the film originally as a student project at New York University, feared that Syvilla Forte—a star in the Katherine Dunham dance troupe and a powerfully influential dance teacher—would be forgotten; the modest film serves as a record of her work. Especially enthusiastic audience reception for this film came from members of the Katherine Dunham dance troupe in the audience. (Similarly *Capoeira of Brazil*, made for PBS, drew enthusiasts of the ritual fight dance style from all over the area to compare notes on their Brazilian dance training.)

In Michelle Parkerson's tightly-made *But Then, She's Betty Carter*, Carter expertly demystifies the scene of the jazz musician. She recalls with fond humor her early days in a beat world; she goes home to her kids and garden; and she sings, taking us along on a wonderful time. Parkerson—an alumna of Temple University's film school and now a video engineer at a TV station—lets the exceptional woman shine without media hype.

Finally Joan Grant's *Fundi* restores Ella Baker, the "godmother of SNCC," to her place in the history of the civil rights movement. Grant is herself a civil rights veteran. *Fundi*'s traditional interview-and-old-footage format is precisely and elegantly executed. Once again there's no pomposity, no false reverence—at least none that Baker herself can't cut right through.

At the Chicago festival audience members used words like "tradition," "roots," "model" and "heritage" in expressing gratitude to filmmakers for rescuing black history from obscurity. Indeed the festival put a heavy emphasis on an upbeat cultural nationalism. *Fundi*, made by an older filmmaker and activist, differed in tone from the majority of films in the package for its overt references not only to politics but to organized social struggle and to institutions through which change was attempted.

The festival emphasized a tendency toward "cultural affirmatives" in novice black filmmakers' work generally, commented black independent film veteran (12 years in the field) St. Clair Bourne. Bourne, founder of *Chamba Notes*, a newsletter for black filmmakers, sees this film package as part of a long and difficult process.

"It's gone from ghetto cinema to international recognition, and that's good," he said. "But this is the fifth generation of black filmmakers. The only problem is that they're still making 'first wave' films—most of them are purely cultural, cultural nationalist. If the black cinema is going to be viable it'll have to be a lot more political than it is now."



St. Clair Bourne weathered an earlier wave of media interest in black film.

And some films use tired forms. A *Minor Altercation*, for instance, a dramatization of a racial incident in a Boston high school, has a social-work, made-for-TV quality about its exposition—the issue overtakes the people. However, the weaknesses that surfaced in a week's presentation were less surprising both than the moments of authenticity on screen and—most of all—the urgency and curiosity demonstrated by the audience.

One of the features of this new wave is participation by women filmmakers, especially on the west coast, and some of their work was shown at the festival. *Syvilla*, *They Dance to Her Drum* is a short black-and-white film made for the impossibly low figure of \$6,000. Ayoka

Bourne knows from bitter experience that the curse of reinventing the wheel has everything to do with racism and resources. After his highly acclaimed documentary *Let the Church Say Amen* he spent years trying to keep a small film business afloat, while the social conditions that had spurred his first success changed. Black subject matter is zoned into a "special interest" box in most programming decisions; private investors rarely back black films; in more conservative national moods the subject matter simply disappears. He has watched several aspiring independent waves collapse as funding—often issuing directly from street protest—died and as trained filmmakers were engulfed by the commercial and industrial world of film-



Ella Baker

FUNDI,

a 63 minute film by Joanne Grant, merits the attention of anyone interested in the black struggle. Ella Baker is described in an early scene as a "fundi," Swahili for a person in the tribe who passes on skills to the next generation, a teacher-doer. It is absolutely the correct term.

Descendant of slaves, Baker grew up in Virginia and North Carolina with a drive to liberate her people. The film hints at her early post-college years in Harlem with the Young Negro Cooperative League and later consumer education work with unions and the Works Project Administration in the '30s. One wishes here for more adequate descriptions of the time and her own on-the-street education. In this period she shaped her political opinions and her drive to work in the most advanced circles of the movement—the NAACP in the late '40s, Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference and eventually the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

The highest praise for her comes from the youngest and from the most radical, whether original SNCCers or veterans such as Ann Braden of the Southern Conference Educational Fund. Vague, hesitant criticism comes from the most conservative, such as Gloster Current, who succeeded her as director of local organizations for the NAACP. He describes her as "left of the civil rights leadership." When we hear her speak at a Puerto Rican freedom rally in the '70s, referring to racism, capitalism and imperialism, we know she is a person of the left and wish the film had more explicitly dealt with her political beliefs.

She offended many in the course of her organizing. She offended the ministers of SCLC during her tenure as its first executive director, before jumping to the militant SNCC sit-inners and voter registration workers. The ministers acknowledge with some embarrassment that they had trouble working with her. But what was it she really did to offend them? How much of it was political differences? We search in vain in this film for the answers to such questions.

Robert Moses, SNCC's central thinker and prime mover during the perilous days of voter registration in the deep South, gives one of the best interviews. In this rare appearance, he touches on Baker's work analytically, while still effusive in tribute to her.

The central accomplishment of the film is that a figure such as Ella Baker is celebrated and documented. That way her role as fundi will continue long after she is no longer with us.

—Don Rose

Don Rose is a veteran civil rights activist and a Chicago political consultant. *Fundi* is available at P.O. Box 195, NYC 10014, (212) 674-0741.

IN THESE TIMES AUGUST 26-SEPTEMBER 1, 1981 13 making. (He is one of the few survivors as an independent from his generation of filmmaking, and is currently working on an NBC White Paper on black America 1981.)

"Someone just called me from a university and asked me if there had ever been a black film festival," he said. "And yet in the early '70s the Philadelphia Black Film Festival became so successful that it went on tour first through the South and then throughout the country. Oliver Franklin and Pearl Bowser would produce black film festivals for people who, often with federal money, commissioned them."

"This generation now has learned how to merchandise, to publicize, to put out catalogues—to master the American style of hype. We need that, even if that's not all we need."

The Berlin Film Festival packagers are highly conscious of the need to build administrative frameworks for filmmaking. The three-year-old Black Filmmaker Foundation offers a variety of liaison services, including cooperative distribution and a catalogue. It sponsors film exhibitions in community centers and advises groups that want to sponsor festivals. The Foundation acts as an institutional umbrella for grant-getters, and has a video cassette and print library.

Recently it moved to WNYD, a city-owned public TV station in New York, where it will sponsor a program of black independent films. The Foundation has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts but, director Denise Oliver noted, the Foundation expects budget cuts to affect its grants and is casting about for profitable projects and for private dollars. Never have black independents needed institutional protection more, for the same reasons that threaten the Foundation's financial health.

THERE

is little hope of help from the world of black commercial features that siphoned off some independent talent in the early '70s before the black Hollywood film fell victim to crossover logic. Roy Campanella, Jr., a CBS program executive who refers to commercial filmmaking as a "virtual closed shop," said, "Most of those films were directed and produced



Film crew works on location for *LET THE CHURCH SAY AMEN*.

by whites. How many times in those films did you see a new vision? There were very few blacks making movies, and most of them were dedicated not to the craft but to making major motion pictures."

Hudlin agrees. "A man like Michael Schultz works in the industry. We've chosen different paths, and we really haven't got a lot to say to each other. At Filmex (the Los Angeles Film Festival) I finally met Sidney Poitier and to my surprise I had nothing to say to him."

"America also places a ceiling on black achievement in motion pictures. There's not much difference between a young black filmmaker who's made one film and an older filmmaker who's made four

Continued on page 22

EDITORIAL

50 years of labor gains at risk in PATCO strike

In 1919 Calvin ("the business of America is business") Coolidge, then governor of Massachusetts, crushed the Boston police strike and refused to rehire the strikers. Coolidge's iron-fisted handling of the striking police won him the vice-presidential nomination in 1920. Advanced to the presidency by President Warren G. Harding's death, Coolidge was elected in his own right in 1924 on a platform promising cuts in government spending and reduction of taxes. This month Coolidge's successor to the presidency took the first step in what may be an attempt to revive big business' "American Plan," which guided the union-busting of the '20s. If Reagan succeeds in breaking the small air traffic controllers' union (PATCO)—and there is good reason to believe that he will—it will be a profound setback for the American labor movement.

Last October, when he was hustling votes, Reagan wrote PATCO president Robert Poli that he had been "thoroughly briefed by members of my staff as to the deplorable state of our nation's air control system." His staff told him, he continued, "that too few people working unreasonable hours with obsolete equipment has placed the nation's air travelers in unwarranted danger." He then went on to assure the controllers, who endorsed him as a result, that he would "take whatever steps are necessary to provide our air traffic controllers with the most modern equipment available and to adjust staff levels and work days" to achieve maximum safety. "I pledge to you," he concluded, "that my administration will work very closely with you to bring about a spirit of cooperation between the president and the air traffic controllers."

In recent weeks, after PATCO members overwhelmingly rejected the government's offer of a new contract, this cooperation has taken the form of firing all PATCO strikers, impounding the union's contingency fund, seeking fines of \$4.4 million against PATCO and filing felony charges against 72 of its leaders, one of whom was led to jail in chains. Then the Reagan administration asked

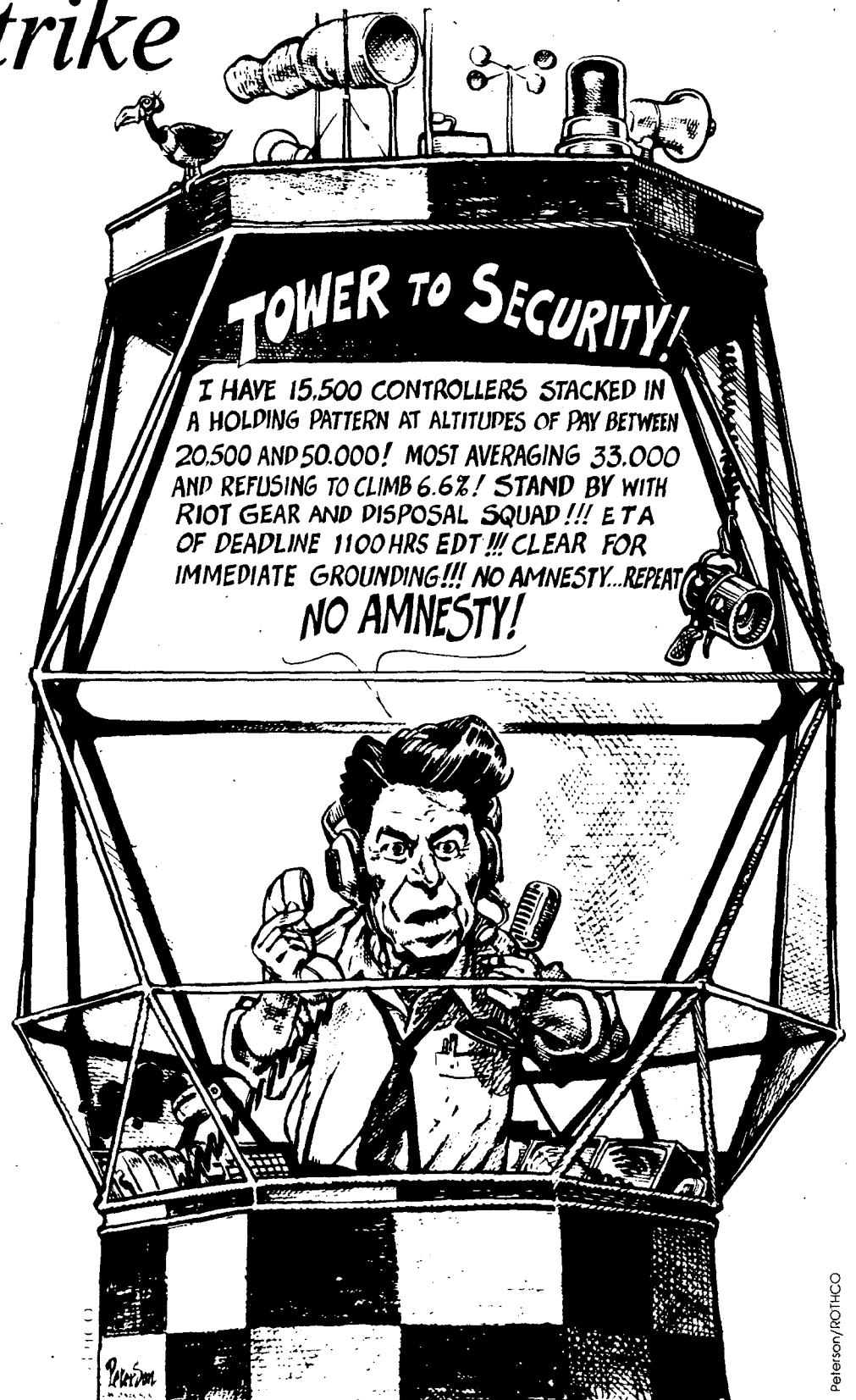
the Federal Labor Relations Authority to decertify PATCO. If this request is granted it will be the first time a national public employees union has been stripped of its negotiating rights.

Reagan justified his assault on PATCO in words reminiscent of Coolidge's declaration that "There is no right to strike against the public safety by anybody, anywhere, any time." And technically, of course, the PATCO strike is in violation of federal law and of the air controllers' oath of office. It is illegal for most public employees to strike, and yet many do. A tradition has grown up under which public employee strike settlements routinely include amnesty for the strikers and no retaliation against the union. In fact, Rep. John Conyers, in introducing a bill (H.R. 4375) that would give public employees the same collective bargaining rights that private sector employees have, has pointed out that public employee strikes have been on the rise in recent years.

Reagan himself has applauded this trend when it manifested itself last summer in Poland. Solidarity, it seems, is a great idea from a distance.

Unfortunately, just as Reagan clearly prefers Solidarity abroad to solidarity at home, so, too, does the AFL-CIO. It is true that PATCO did little to seek support from other unions, or, for that matter, from the public. But, especially from the labor movement's point of view, that is no longer the point. The breaking of PATCO would have a profound negative effect on unions in general and particularly on public employee unions. And yet the AFL-CIO council took virtually no action to back up the air controllers, despite Machinists' president William Winpisinger's request that they do so.

There may be only a small number of people involved in this strike, but the stakes are high. Reagan has found a perfect opening wedge in his determination to cut back the power and influence of labor in this country. He and his corporate advisors understand the importance of the strike. So far, however, there is little indication that the leaders of American unions do.



Reagan's supply-side program for crime

In his 1968 presidential campaign, Richard Nixon promised an electorate deeply concerned about growing crime and violence that he would restore "law and order." Since then, of course, crime rates have risen—even, briefly, in the White House—and the threat of violent crime plagues Americans more than ever. The Reagan administration programs will affect crime in the United States in two ways. His budget and tax cuts will, through greater hardship, provide greater incentives for citizens to become criminals and his program on violent crime will punish them more severely for doing so.

On the supply-side, Reagan's transfer of billions of dollars from low-income working and unemployed people to the wealthy and his cutting back on programs to help low-income workers (the not-quite-truly needy) feed, house, educate and keep their families healthy will give impetus to resort to theft and incentive to seek revenge on society at large as well as on those whose greater clout in Washington will make them even more conspicuous consumers. Of course the experts are not sure that supply-side techniques will actually stimulate the criminal urge, but at least

Thatcherism in Britain provides some evidence that it will. That's more than can be said about the prospects for supply-side economics stimulating the economy.

Meanwhile, on the demand (to do something about it) side, Attorney General William French Smith has declared the fight against violent crime to be his "highest priority." On March 5, he appointed a blue ribbon Task Force on Violent Crime headed by former attorney general Griffin Bell and Illinois governor James Thompson (a former district attorney). The task force has now concluded its deliberations and predictably recommends several changes in the law to make it easier to get convictions in criminal cases and to keep the accused in jail until they can be tried.

One measure recommended by the task force is to restrict the exclusionary rule, which requires judges to reject evidence obtained through means that violate the Fourth Amendment guarantee against unreasonable searches and seizures. The task force urges legislation to allow into evidence information obtained by officials "acting with a reasonable good-faith belief that the search

and seizure was in conformity with the Fourth Amendment," even if in fact it was not.

The task force also urged that laws governing bail be altered so that judges may prevent the release of defendants whom they consider to be a danger to the community, even though it is virtually impossible to predict dangerous behavior. (The American Psychiatric Association, for example, is on record saying that neither psychiatrists nor anyone else can make such predictions.) This change would give judges power of preventive detention.

And, finally, the task force recommends that Congress authorize \$2 billion in federal assistance to the states to help them build more prisons.

A real problem.

Crime is an increasingly serious problem in our communities, one that the left has tended to take too lightly. Working-class communities, and especially black and Hispanic ghettos, are disproportionately victimized by crime, as are older people, women and others who for one reason or another are vulnerable. All Americans share an interest in reducing

crime and in protecting citizens from violence against people or their property. But strict enforcement, even though desirable if it is even-handed and fair, will not substantially reduce crime, much less stop it.

Poverty is not the major source of crime, though in any society some poor people will always be driven to steal. Nor is inequality, per se—there are many societies where great inequality exists, but where the impoverished are isolated enough from the affluent to reduce both the opportunities and incentives to strike back. But in our highly integrated society where virtually everyone owns a television set and is constantly bombarded with entreaties to consume and with examples of others who have all they can use and more, poverty and inequality take on a different meaning. This is especially so when we have an administration that is bluntly committed to helping the rich and to taking from the poor, an administration that believes inequality is a virtue, a spur to initiative. Thus the Reagan administration, even if it is successful in locking up more criminals, will create much more crime than it prevents.

LETTERS

IN THESE TIMES is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions express in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

NAMIBIA

IN THESE TIMES, JUNE 17, CONTAINED an interesting article, "Overtures to the underdogs," referring to South West Africa/Namibia. Most Americans have very little information about the national security interest the U.S. has in Namibia.

Although Namibia has a population of only one million persons in a desert land twice the size of California, it has the largest uranium mine in the world, plus vast resources of diamonds, copper, zinc and other strategic minerals. Walvis Bay on Namibia's southwest coast is the only deep water port between Cape Town and Luanda, Angola, 1,500 miles to the north, which is useable by Soviet nuclear submarines to bisect the oil pipeline from the Persian Gulf.

For some years a Soviet-sponsored terrorist organization known as SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization) has been conducting a guerrilla campaign from sanctuaries in Marxist Angola to take over Namibia. The United Nations, which U.S. taxpayers support with \$500 million a year, uses some of its budget to finance SWAPO. To this extent, Americans are financing their own destruction. Congress should prohibit UN use of American tax dollars to finance terrorism.

-K. Atukuta, Member
Council of Ministers
Southwest Africa/Namibia

SOUTHERN STRATEGY

YOUR EDITORIAL, "A NEW STRATEGY for the New South" (ITT, July 29) made reference to the Parker-Coltrane Political Action Committee created by Rep. John Conyers. Its primary goal is to recruit and support black and progressive candidates for Congress in the South, rather than merely to unseat conservative incumbents who consistently ignore the interests of black and minority communities in their districts.

The South is fertile ground for an expansion of black and progressive politics. It is the only region experiencing a rising level of black registration and voter turnout. It has had the biggest increase in numbers of black elected officials. There exists in the South a large and growing pool of outstanding political talent that, under the right conditions, could become the springboard for new leadership in the nation.

Incidentally, the Parker-Coltrane PAC welcomes contributions, which are tax deductible. Contributions should be made out to the Parker-Coltrane Political Action Committee, P.O. Box 50523, Washington, D.C. 20004.

-Neil Kotler, Treasurer,
Washington, D.C.

UNNATURAL?

IN JOHN JUDIS' ARTICLE "WHOSE SIDE are tax cutters on?" (ITT, July 29) the following sentence is found in the opening paragraph: "Tax policies can temper or exacerbate capitalism's natural tendencies to polarize society into rich and poor, affluent and indigent." I don't believe capitalism has any such natural tendencies. But, if John Judis would insist that it does, I would be interested in knowing how he defines

capitalism, or how he understands it, such that these tendencies exist. I have no sympathy for our present economic organization, but let's be right about what we say.

-Steve Boslian
Madison, Wisc.

SECOND THOUGHTS

IN THE PAST FEW DAYS I CAME INTO possession of *In These Times*.

It is a fairly good paper from what I've read of it so far. But one I have not seen or read before.

As an independent voter who voted for Ronnie Reagan, I'm beginning to wonder if I wasted my vote on the Reagan administration.

As a veteran of 21 years in the U.S. Army, I get the impression that Ronnie Reagan is very anti-veteran, among other things.

-John M. Kligus
Washington, D.C.

IRRITATED

I AM WRITING TO SOOTHE AN IRRITANT a month past. Joe Cuomo wrote a muddy and insulting letter concerning Martha Rosler's review of Meiselas' and McCullin's work (ITT, July 1). Since I considered Rosler's article to be the bright spot of that issue and also in its wit and thoroughness to be part of that cultural criticism that is beginning to raise ITT above the average leftist newsweekly, I was considerably distressed that Cuomo went unopposed. Perhaps it is on account of the letter's insignificance. Invective unbuttressed by argument does not stand long in the memory and does not allow one to appreciate fully Cuomo's viewpoint in its insufficiency, such as he weekly manifests over the radio. Nevertheless it rankles that he represents me by default.

First, did Rosler shoot his cat or something? Why the utter absence of civility? And to what end? In the first paragraph he is content to sum up Rosler's complex and allusive article in three sentences. Rosler's Cuomoized conclusion: these books are bad. How he could see so little in so much is made clear in what he poses as a counterargument; the books are all good, because they are felt in the pit of his ample stomach. Therefore, they do not, say, illustrate also an ideology beneath a searching eye, because that would be being in two places at once.

Cuomo is, I am sorry to say, a flathead, and the third dimension of reality is invisible to him. Anti-intellectualism is made no more fertile by the infection of self-righteousness. For the rest of us who read this paper to increase our awareness, please, more articles like Rosler's.

-Joe Klemke
(Within earshot of WBAI) New York

FRESH AIR

IT'S NICE TO SEE A LEFT ARTICLE ON the perils of the new computer technological wave that proposes real socialist solutions and doesn't tremble in fear (ITT, July 15). As a former postal worker (I was fired for my role in the 1970 strike), I found the electronic postal service piece a breath of fresh air.

One solution Paul Roose suggested deserves endorsement by all unions: "saving jobs through a shorter work week at the same pay." Since the invention of the wheel, that has been the

promise of science: to free the workers from labor so that workers will have more time to manage society.

If the idea of full employment is examined closely one begins to realize that it puts real social power in the hands of women, minorities and everyone. Looking back on the historical black march on Washington, D.C., in October 1963, most of the picket signs I saw focused on one demand: "Jobs for All." If we are ever to move really to end racism and sexism, I suspect our first step will be to guarantee full employment at union wages.

-Paul Kangas
San Francisco

R.G. DAVIS

WE WISH TO CORRECT AN ERROR IN the interview with theater director R.G. Davis (ITT, July 29). Contrary to his assertion, Davis did not translate Dario Fo's comedy *We Won't Pay, We Won't Pay!* It would have been difficult for him to do so, because he does not know Italian. Davis directed the New York production, using an adapted version of our translation, which had previously been reviewed and accepted, with minor revisions, by Dario Fo's own theater collective in Milan. In exchange for exclusive rights to use our translation, Davis paid us a small fee and agreed, both verbally and in writing, to credit us as translators on the playbill.

Why Davis, a respected artist who has made a notable contribution to contemporary American theater, should have chosen to take credit for work he did not do is as perplexing to us as his motivations for rejecting the experience of what he calls "alternative" theater in favor of the New York commercial stage. Unfortunately, the ITT interview, which might have helped clarify these issues, was so poorly conducted and edited that it muddled them still further.

-Suzanne and Jim Cowan
Santa Cruz, Calif.

GEM

I WANT TO CONVEY MY APPRECIATION for Charles Sugnet's review of superhero movies (ITT, July 29).

Rarely do I read a piece that is so thought-provoking, concise, and well-written. It was a gem.

He shared, at once, a great depth of understanding of our culture, of human nature, and an encouragement of the best in us.

-Patricia Woodruff
Lexington, Ky.

SOLIDARITY?

TO THE EVERLASTING SHAME AND disgrace of the so-called American labor movement, the only active assistance the air traffic controllers have received has come from foreign trade unions. Controllers in Canada, Britain, France, Spain, Portugal and Australia have taken action to support our striking controllers while the mighty AFL-CIO leaders stand around with their fingers in their ears.

As an old CIO hand, I feel betrayed by the do-nothingness of American unions. Sure, Doug Fraser got his picture taken wearing a PATCO picket sign. Big deal! Where are all the pilots, mechanics, ground service crews, flight attendants, etc.? Because the leaders of PATCO were stupid enough to endorse Reagan for president, is that a reason to hold still while they run rough-shod over the controllers and reestablish government by injunction? Where will the auto workers, machinists, oil workers, chemical workers, steel workers and all other union men be when their turns come?

John L. Lewis stood up to Harry Truman when he threatened to put soldiers in the mines. Joe Stack and other NMU leaders stood up to him when he threatened to put Navy crews on the

merchant ships. They won their fight because behind them were the ILWU, the Steelworkers, Mine, Mill & Smelter Workers, UE, FTA, and all other militant unions, ready to lay down the tools from coast to coast.

The forthcoming Solidarity Day (Sept. 19) will surely have a hollow ring if America's unions allow the controllers to go down the drain. Why don't the rank-and-filers take matters into their own hands?

-Ted Means
New Orleans

GLOSS

THE EDITORIAL "A NEW STRATEGY for the New South" (ITT, July 29) glossed over an important aspect of Wayne Dowdy's July 7 victory in Mississippi's fourth Congressional District.

You noted that "blacks united behind the Democratic candidate against the Reagan Republican, Liles Williams." You noted that "Dowdy went out of his way to win over two groups often ignored by Mississippi Democrats: labor and blacks." But you failed to explore whether Dowdy's newfound concern for the interests of labor and blacks was generated by his fear that an independent black candidate would enter the race, as has occurred in the district in the past few elections?

As long as labor and minorities have nowhere else to go, the Democrats will continue to move to the right as they try to out-Reagan Reagan. But when working people build their own independent electoral alternatives—as they did in the 4th C.D.—the Democrats will face a countervailing force pulling them leftward.

-Rick Kisseil
National Secretary
Socialist Party
Milwaukee, Wisc.

IMMIGRATION

BILL BLUM'S ARTICLE ON IMMIGRATION policy (ITT, Aug. 12) makes me wonder just what policy might satisfy him, and Edward Roybal, and the ACLU.

I suppose such a policy would require putting in revolving doors on our southern border, for a first step, to accommodate the two-way traffic from Mexico and beyond. Then we'd have to change the language of daily life, probably—but not necessarily—to Spanish. We could make English and a second language equal with each other. But look at the trouble this measure has caused in Canada and Belgium. No, I don't think that would work for long. The final step would probably be to give instant citizenship to everybody that sets foot in the country, with some exceptions made—perhaps—for tourists. That might (or might not) debase the meaning of citizenship, but on the other hand, we can't turn away these refugees and still live with ourselves, can we?

Well, I can almost hear the outrage now: "Why are you printing this 'reactionary' drivel?" But the point that must be answered here is, there has to be some larger meaning to the word "American" than only "someone who lives in the U.S." These immigrants who are now phantom immigrants, are being offered some chance to come out of hiding and start living like citizens, if they want to. The plan is certainly not perfect, but it is better than anything else that is likely to come along soon.

-D. Alan Curry
Danville, N.Y.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters less than 250 words long. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

LABOR HISTORY

Blacks have been the catalysts in promoting racial solidarity

Series editors: Paul Buhle and Alan Dawley. ©1981 Paul Buhle, Alan Dawley.

By Richard Thomas

FROM ITS INCEPTION THE American labor movement has been dogged by the persistent problem of racism within its ranks. Yet the movement has also scored impressive victories over class and race oppression, because of the persistent challenge of black trade unionists. By insisting on the needs of all segments of the working class, black or white, employed or unemployed, the black challenge has been a catalyst for social justice within the labor movement.

This black challenge goes back to 1869 when the Colored National Labor Union convened to protest exclusion from the mainstream of the white trade union movement. Later on, gallant struggles for racial equality were waged in the Noble Order of the Knights of Labor (which was dubbed by some as "the black International") and the Industrial Workers of the World.

Such struggles made little headway in the American Federation of Labor (AFL)

temporary class challenge to capitalists.

From the very beginning the CIO promised black workers a fair shake. During the 1936-37 organizing drives in steel and autos, the CIO organized on an integrated basis. In 1939, the Georgia Ku Klux Klan "declared war" on the Textile Workers Organizing Committee because of its interracial program. Such actions prompted the NAACP to comment, "It has often been said that you can tell a man by the kind of enemies he makes. If this is true of organizations also, then the CIO is certainly an unparalleled blessing in our land." The CIO went on to earn more praise from black leaders and workers when it assigned leadership positions to black workers.

Some black leaders remained skeptical because of their past experiences with the AFL. Lester Grange, speaking for the National Urban League, cautioned black workers against "jubilantly rushing toward what they assume to be a new day for labor and a new organization to take the place of the AFL." But it was not long before the CIO won the endorsement of the National Negro Congress (NNC). The NNC was founded in 1936 just a few months after the founding of the CIO by more than 250 influential

vided the new industrial union with its most radical support.

As the CIO met the black challenge by fighting against the racism of both capitalists and workers, it became known among the black community as its best ally. During the Ford strike of 1941, many conservative local black leaders took Henry Ford's side against the UAW-CIO. But after Ford went down to defeat and the UAW-CIO sided with black workers

Black unionists gave the fledgling CIO its most militant support.

against the attempts of white workers to prevent black workers from obtaining jobs in defense industries, the attitudes of these local black leaders changed drastically. By 1945 the black community, as one labor scholar has pointed out, "looked upon the CIO and the idea of labor solidarity as the black man's greatest hope for social and economic progress in the post-war period."

The honeymoon, however, between black workers and the CIO soon ended. The persistent economic and social prob-

more than other unions in promoting racial equality. Such unions as the United Packing House Workers, the International Fur and Leather Workers Union, the Marine Cooks and Stewards, among others, laid the foundation for interracial labor solidarity. When the radical elements in these unions were purged, black workers were forced to struggle almost alone against persistent racism in the labor movement.

The first significant post-war challenge occurred in 1950 in the form of the National Negro Labor Conference. It arose in a period of great hardship for black workers. Most of the economic advances made by black industrial workers occurred between 1942 and 1945 and were largely lost during the post-war reconversion of war industries into peace-time production. Reconversion fell heaviest on black industrial workers because of their greater concentration in unskilled war production jobs with the least possibility of reconversion to civilian production. In 1946, the Fair Employment Practices Com-

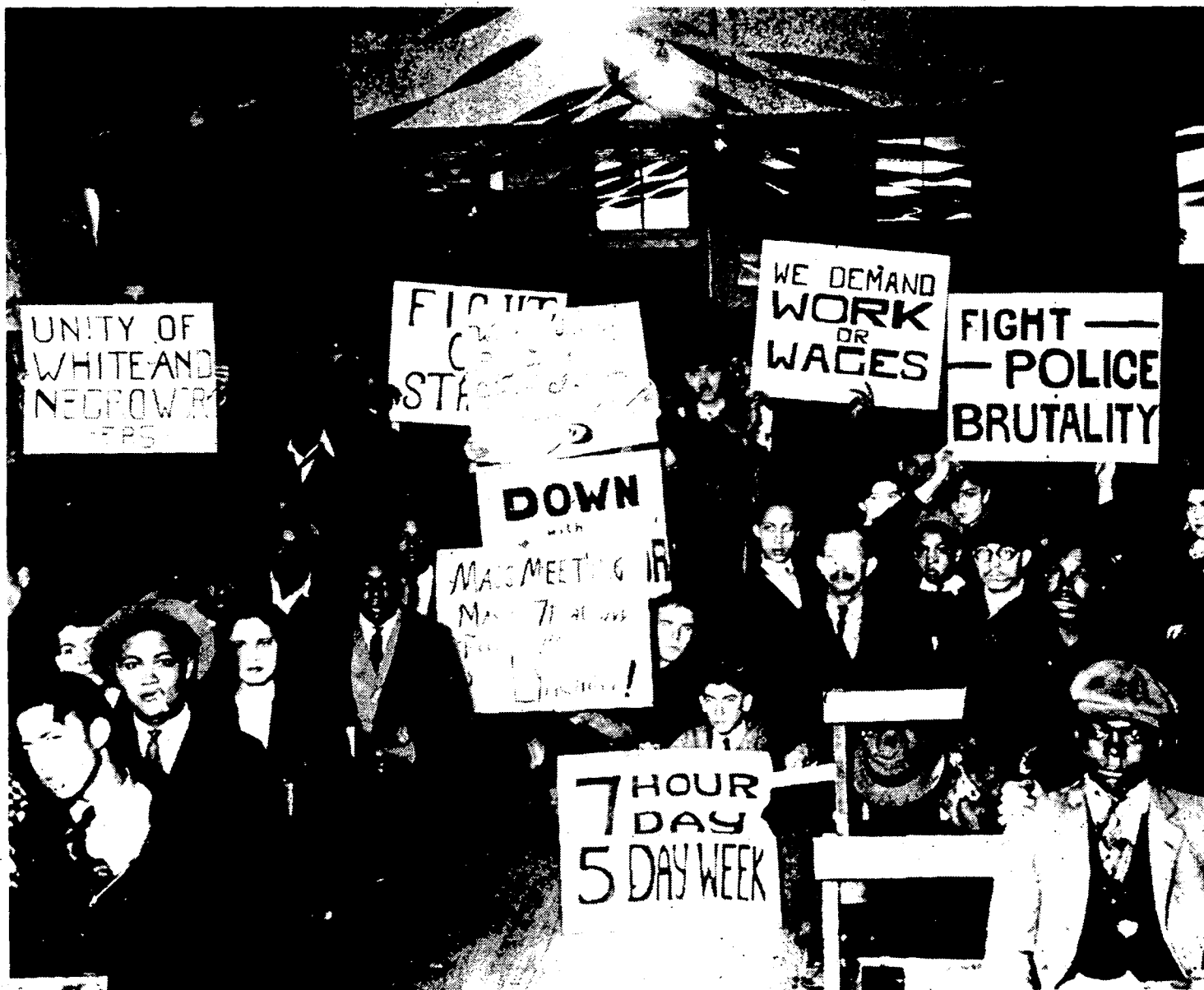
mission's (FEPC) final report revealed that black workers were experiencing more unemployment than white workers in six of the seven war centers studied. The dire economic plight of black industrial workers was worsened by the government's failure to push for a strong permanent FEPC, without which black workers could not hope for much government protection.

As unemployment began steadily rising, many black workers began a descent into a permanent depression. On the heels of this job loss came a technological revolution that ate away at the heart of black employment—the unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. As northern black workers were struggling just to hold on to wartime gains, they were joined by tens of thousands of displaced southern black agricultural workers, gradually being pushed northward by the impact of agricultural technology on the southern plantation economy. To compound hard times, organized labor in many ways was becoming part of the problem again rather than part of the solution.

More so than any other single segment of the American working class, black workers stood alone at this hour. Black middle-class organizations like the NAACP and the Urban League had no solutions to the problems of black workers. The promising National Negro Congress had lasted less than 10 years, while the March on Washington Movement died during the post-war period.

But what about the labor movement and the promises of the CIO? Many white labor leaders believed they had met the major challenge of black workers by bringing them into the CIO on a non-racial basis and fighting for the rights of black workers to obtain jobs in the defense industries. These leaders failed to understand that the black working class had historically fought both a class and race struggle, and that to the black community the race struggle was much more compelling because it was being waged against both white capital and labor. The challenge, then, facing leftists in the labor movement was to support black workers in both of these struggles. Unfortunately, even the most progressive segments failed to meet this challenge.

This challenge was voiced repeatedly at the National Labor Conference for Negro Rights held in Chicago in June of 1950 (which led to the formation of the National Negro Labor Council a year later). The Communist Party was among those initiating the NNLC and gave it active support throughout its existence. Black delegates from the AFL reported that the Federation was still discriminating against black workers. CIO black delegates accused it of retreating from its earlier position on the rights of black workers. All the delegates agreed that black workers were being discriminated against in apprenticeship training programs and that they were being barred



under the reign of Samuel Gompers. On the other hand, the Congress of Industrial Organizations had to be sensitive to racial realities in the mass production industries of steel, rubber, auto, mining and meat-packing where there were large concentrations of black workers. It was at this point that the black challenge to labor had its greatest impact.

Before the CIO recruitment drive among black industrial workers, the most direct challenge to labor was strikebreaking. Contrary to many popular beliefs, before the CIO came on the labor scene, strikebreaking had become a conscious aspect of intra-class struggles against the white workers' racial dominance in the workplace. The CIO was able to divert this aspect of the black challenge to labor into a

blacks, who called for a National Negro Congress made up of all black organizations "from old-line Republican to Communist" to address the urgent problems of black people. Organizing black industrial workers was considered to be one of the most pressing of these problems.

At the first session of the NNC held in Chicago, A. Phillip Randolph told the delegates representing 585 organizations that their special mission was to "draw Negro workers into labor organizations and break down the color bar in the trade unions that now have it."

The pro-labor orientation of the NNC was crucial at a time when the CIO needed all the help it could get. The NNC not only endorsed the CIO, but also, because of its strong Communist elements, pro-

lems of black workers of necessity gave rise to new and more urgent challenges, many of which could not be effectively met by the CIO alone. The AFL was still very powerful and unrelenting in its racism. During their 1946 convention, AFL members voted down resolutions to end segregated auxiliary locals. Meanwhile, the CIO was slowly losing its fighting spirit as it drifted into an "unholy alliance" with the AFL to discredit Communist-led unions.

Several years before their formal merger into the AFL-CIO, these two labor organizations competed with each other in driving out of the labor movement many of the very radicals who had worked hardest for black people. In fact, during World War II, left-wing unions did



A. Phillip Randolph, one of the AFL's most prominent black trade-union leaders, urged delegates at the first National Negro Congress to "draw Negro workers into labor organizations" while also breaking the unions' color bar.

from advancing into skilled and semi-skilled jobs by racist collective bargaining agreements.

Deciding the black workers had to take the lead in their own struggle, the Conference established a Continuation Committee composed of veteran black labor leaders. William R. Hood, recording secretary of Local 600, UAW-CIO, was made president of the committee; Cleveland Robinson, vice president of the Distributive, Processing, and Office Workers Union (District 65), was made vice president, and Coleman Young of the Amalgamated Clothing Worker staff and by then a veteran labor leader in Detroit as well as former director of organization of the Wayne County CIO Council, was made executive secretary of the committee.

In less than a year, this committee set up 23 Negro Labor Councils in major industrial cities; and these local NLCs immediately began combating racial discrimination on all fronts. The NLC of Greater New York sprang into action a week after the National Conference by calling a "Job Action Conference," attended by 250 trade unionists. They reported on problems in the building

trades, printing, railroads, utilities and other industries. The Conference resulted in 250 jobs and a commitment from the public relations manager of Safeway Stores promising that each qualified applicant would be given an equal opportunity for employment.

The NLC in Chicago began a drive against racial discrimination in the Woolworth and Scott Stores where blacks could shop but not work. The manager of Woolworth swore that he would not hire black saleswomen "until hell freezes

Louisville Board of Education to prepare black workers for jobs that were to be opened by General Electric.

In 1951, during the NNLC's first campaign to have a "model FEPC clause" incorporated into every union contract, only the United Electrical and Radio Machine Workers Union (UE) did so. This union not only adopted the model clause as its official union policy but also set up a Fair Practices Committee to take the lead in a "nationwide drive for the full rights of its black and women members." While left-wing trade unions, such as the Marine Cooks and Stewards and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Unions offered their wholehearted support of the NLCs, other unions such as the UAW engaged in "red-baiting."

In Detroit, one of the most successful NLCs under the leadership of William R. Hood of Local 600 was a constant worry to the UAW leadership. The NLC and Walter Reuther did not see eye-to-eye on the former's petition drive for a local FEPC ordinance. Reuther, along with seven other international officers, ordered all auto workers who had signed the petition to withdraw their names, calling the people behind the drive "irresponsible" and "Communist-inspired," because they had not consulted with the UAW-CIO.

But the conflict between black workers in the Detroit NLC and the UAW leadership went deeper than the clash over the FEPC drive. For several years, black workers had been challenging the UAW's all-white male leadership to push more vigorously for the upgrading of black workers as well as the inclusion of blacks on the UAW's major policy-making body, the International Executive Board. The UAW's failure to meet this challenge led black workers to continue their own independent struggles against the racism of both capitalists and labor.

Led by the Detroit NLC, black NLCs around the nation held a conference in October 1951 to set up a National Negro Labor Council (NNLC). Several white labor leaders of the AFL and the CIO ac-

The newly merged AFL-CIO fought "communism," not racism.

over." But when the NLC set up picket lines around the stores, causing business to fall off by 85 percent, the stores gave up and hired black women. On the West Coast, the NLC helped the Urban League in California's East Bay win a victory over the Key System Transit Lines, a local transport monopoly, that refused to hire black workers. The NLCs were equally effective in the South. The NLC led a successful struggle to force the

cused the convention of "dual unionism." Organizers denied the charge and defined the NNLC's objective as building a new organization to encourage black workers to join unions and encourage unions to organize black workers. The delegates also informed their white trade union critics that "that day has ended when white trade union leaders or white leaders in any organization may presume to tell Negroes on what basis

they shall come together to fight for their rights.... We ask your cooperation—but we do not ask your permission!"

The convention adopted two major tasks for itself: to defeat racial discrimination in industry and to eliminate racism in the trade union movement and use it as a base from which trade unions and progressive white allies could struggle for the economic liberation of blacks. No sooner had the goals been stated than the newly formed organization was attacked by white CIO leaders, led by James B. Carey, as a tool of the Soviet Union. Such attacks masked the fears and unwillingness of many white labor leaders adequately to assess independent black working-class organizations. The red-baiting and "dual unionism" accusations helped pave the way for the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) to harass the NNLC. Such harassment along with other adverse pressures forced the demise of the NNLC in 1956.

Racism within the ranks of labor remained an issue, particularly after the merger of the AFL-CIO in 1955. Many black trade unionists saw the merger as a signal of organized labor's declining interest and commitment to the struggle against racism. Notwithstanding the vague promises of equality put into the new organization's constitution, black workers were well aware of the lack of enforcement that rendered such promises meaningless. The AFL-CIO constitution provided sanctions against affiliates dominated by "Communists" while providing little or no sanction against affiliates dominated by racists. It was clear that such a challenge—namely to provide protection for non-white workers against union racism—was not to be taken seriously. No wonder, then, that five years later in 1960, the NAACP's labor secretary, Herbert Hill, revealed that many AFL-CIO affiliates were yet restricting black workers to segregated locals, that black auto and steel workers were yet confined to unskilled jobs and that several Southern affiliates were working with White Citizens' Councils.

By 1960, American labor still had a long way to go in meeting the black challenge. While prominent white labor leaders would march alongside blacks in the great civil rights demonstrations in Detroit, Washington and Selma, and endorse the principle of equality in theory, they would fail to mount a strong and persistent struggle against racism within their own ranks. This failure to mount such a struggle left a vacuum that would only be filled by independent black labor organizations.

Richard Thomas is an Associate Professor in the College of Urban Development at Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich.

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PERSPECTIVES

Rep. John Conyers, Democrat of Michigan, and San Francisco supervisor Harry Britt were featured speakers at a public rally during the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee's national convention in Philadelphia on May 22. Among the other speakers were British Labour party leader Anthony Wedgewood Benn (see "Perspectives," In These Times, July 15) and International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers union staff member Marjorie Phye. The following are excerpted versions of Conyers' and Britt's speeches.

The time is at hand to fight back



By John Conyers

THE CONGRESSIONAL Black Caucus is now the sole progressive political element in Washington. After more than a decade it came to political maturity with submission of the Caucus' budget proposal this spring. Under the challenge of Reaganomics, we were forced to construct our own budget. The President said, "Now stop criticizing and come up with something better." And we did.

That budget gave us, for the first time in my career in Congress, two hours on the floor of the House. I remarked to Ron Dellums that that was the longest time we have ever been permitted to speak on the floor of the Congress since either one of us had been there, on issues we wanted to. It marked a very important beginning.

It's important for us to recognize that the issue remains, because the pain and the obscenity of the Reagan budget is going to be felt deeper and deeper every day across the United States of America.

And therein lies our opportunity. It gives us a chance, not just to fight cutbacks, but to organize to change the character of the body politic in the United States. It also gives us a chance, now that we've dealt with the budget in general overview terms, to turn to the tax proposals now being debated in the Congress. And here again I want to present the Congressional Black Caucus' tax proposal, which is tax reform, not tax cuts. Therein lies the guts of changing an economic system that is inherently unfair for working peoples and minorities—to change the tax code. We have dared to speak to this issue in a way that will make you proud of us.

It is important that we consider the political situation we're in. On the first foreign policy issue the administration has failed miserably. You know what it is: El Salvador—a wringing defeat in which nine out of 10 Americans are against this administration's further involvement in that country. They see the

Vietnamization of El Salvador even if the people in the State Department don't.

In trying to take on Social Security they've also been forced to back off, at least temporarily, because they realize that to take on the hopes of senior citizens by the millions is more than they can handle politically.

When we talk about the deficit, which was one of the main points on which Carter was attacked, we now have the classic budget dilemma that led many Republicans originally to vote against the budget proposal. They realize full well that their budget deficit far exceeds the Carter deficit, and under the Kemp-Roth tax proposals it has nowhere to go but up. And they can now begin to visualize themselves explaining to voters how their deficit is far higher than the Carter deficit.

And so it won't work, brothers and sisters. They begin to see it; we've known it all along. And the question becomes: How do we handle this?

There's work to be done in the constituencies from which all of us come. There is far more work to be done in the black struggle to make sure progressive, even radical, ideas come forward in that movement. Far more left ideas need to come forward from the labor movement. The church has begun taking important steps toward politicalization that are just beginning to show their importance. Each of these constituencies needs to be developed in order to fight the cuts, to push tax reform instead of tax gimmicks, to fight the insane foreign policy that can only threaten a nuclear holocaust.

We need to identify at the local levels those people who now see the folly of replacing Carter with Reagan. And inside the Democratic party there is an even more immediate issue, which is what to do with more than a hundred members of Congress who decided to capitulate and vote for this obscene, Gramm-Latta budget that promised to slash 83 federal domestic programs.

We have to call into account every Democrat, representative and senator alike, who dared to violate the moderate philosophy of the Democratic party and vote for the Reagan budget. It's sad enough that we have only a two-party system in this country, but it's even worse when one of the parties totally capitulates to the other.

Two things should now happen. One, the Congressional Black Caucus and those who voted with them on their budget should challenge the Democratic leadership in the House of Representatives—with your gentle, tender encouragement—to resign, to step aside, to let the real Democrats run the House Democratic majority while it still exists. Or else run us out of the Democratic Party. There's no room anymore to have 29 committee chairmen of the Democratic Party voting for the Reagan administration budget. That's an absurdity.

It makes meaningless the political process in the country when we have that go-

The present leaders should step aside, or kick us out.

ing on. That challenge cannot be launched solely within the halls of congress. It has to be launched from the outside. We know that in studying the psyche of members of Congress there is one thing they value more highly than anything else. That's the full employment concept as it applies to themselves. Until you understand that, you are not really prepared to deal with the federal legislature. The members of Congress begin as something else. They were lawyers, farmers, businessmen, some may have been unemployed. Whatever they

were they brought a little handful of belief system, a code of morality, when they got there. They didn't just spring full-blown into the kind of person that you frequently rail about. You should understand the secret that it doesn't take everybody in this audience to turn a member of Congress around. It takes one of you to tell that fellow that he's going to be disemployed by his electorate if he makes one more funny move. Then you're going to get his undivided attention. And because many of them are not even committed conservatives, they will be anxious to fly to the head of the line, in front of the Black Caucus, in front of Conyers, in front of Dellums, to urge what is necessary for them to make sure that unemployment in their congressional district doesn't go up by one, namely themselves.

If you understand this, then you begin to see what it is we have to do. The job becomes far less difficult and ominous than it may seem. There are 435 of them; each of you have one, whether you want one or not. And that member, whatever his present political condition may be, owes you an accounting for every decision he or she makes while in the 97th session of Congress. You ought to get it from them, and exchange it for what you believe the position of that representative or senator ought to be. If we begin to do that, we will begin to organize as we said we must. We will begin to start the movement at the grassroots level, which is where everything must begin. We will begin to fight the cutbacks that must be fought. And we will be laying most importantly, the background for a new politics in this country.

I hear an awful lot of fear



By Harry Britt

THERE IS A CONTRADICTION in American politics that the American people are fully aware of. People know that what James Watt is doing to the environment is in the interests of the corporations, not in the interests of human beings. And they know that allowing the entire northeastern part of the United States to be sacrificed because it is in the interests of corporations to move to the Sunbelt is an immoral and unnecessary fact of life.

People with real problems in their lives are profoundly aware of their lack of investment in a system that is not working for them, and they are ready to hear the word of an alternative vision that people on the left have to offer.

It is no accident that racial minorities have systematically been deprived of full participation in a society that is dominated by corporations. It is no accident that there is a bigoted reaction against multilingual outreach programs to people whose native language is Spanish, or Chinese, or something else, because the corporations understand that if we bring these people into full participation in this society, there will be a profound and

radical exposure of the fundamental contradiction that corporate America cannot tolerate. And the greatest barrier that must be overcome if we on the left are going to expose that contradiction and change it, is the barrier that prevents full participation by women in the power relationships in this country of ours.

One of the greatest aids corporate America has in maintaining its control of our society is sexism, because sexism conditions people to live lives in ways that are contrary to their interests. Sexism teaches us to look upwards to pow-

The intensity of people's fear indicates the system's failure.

er, to male power, to dominant power as the bedrock of our society. Sexism denies to our people the alternative of cooperative solutions to problems. Corporate America has a great deal to fear from the women's movement.

There is another factor in our failure to assist people to live the socialist way, the natural way...and the human way. Maybe I'm being an ex-minister here, but I want to say a word about fear. I believe a fundamental reason middle-America has not responded to what is natural and obvious to us is an extraordinary fear of the future, an extraordinary fear of change, that permeates our society. We as democratic socialists spend a lot of time talking about defining socialism, but if we're going to define democracy, we have to be willing really to believe that if you listen to human beings, to where they're coming from right now, not in some socialist utopia, you're going to hear a message that we can honor.

When I listen to the people that didn't vote for me I hear an awful lot of fear. You cannot explain Ronald Reagan as a turn to the right. You can only explain Ronald Reagan as a very deep desire on the part of American people for some protection against a future they're threatened by.

The very intensity of their fear of the future is a testimony to the failure of the system under which we live—the failure of corporate domination to meet the needs of human beings in a way that gives them the freedom to face the future with courage, confidence and optimism.

If we are going to be successful as socialists, we must address that fear. Any gay person can tell you that fear is a paralyzing thing, because the obvious thing for us to do is hide in the terrible fear that someone will find out about us. Believe me, it paralyzes you, and it should not surprise us that middle America is paralyzed and willing to give credibility to idiots like Jerry Falwell and romantic irrelevancies like Ronald Reagan rather than address in an intelligent and responsible way the challenges of the future.

The gay and lesbian movement is not afraid of the moral majority. The women's movement is not afraid of the moral majority. The women's movement is not afraid of resistance to the inevitable victory of feminism in our society. People who are disabled are crying out loud and clear that they have a very strong message for us. Senior citizens are standing up against the definition of them as weak, powerless people who must depend upon charity from the larger society. Environmentalists are saying that the corporations must be accountable. Consumer activists are saying the corporations must be accountable. All of these people are saying that economic decisions must be accountable to the people.

Well, that's what democratic socialism is all about. And the future of the American left is listening to those constituencies. If any left constituency is out there struggling, we must be there, too. And we must do it in a profound faith that the socialist tradition is saying something basic about human nature. If we plug into people at their point of struggle, history will show us to prevail.

INPRINT

CRITICISM

A.J. Liebling's freedom with the press

The Press

By A.J. Liebling
Pantheon, 355 pp., \$6.95

By Michael Miner

A. Liebling's press criticism has its basic points, and dominates the pack like Secretariat in the Belmont Stakes: publishers are rich men who view their papers as disposable assets useful in the meantime in bailing the world as it pleases rich men to understand it. "Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one," is Liebling's most famous line, which, it turns out, appears in parentheses (with Liebling, God is often in the parentheses). He was *The New Yorker's* principal press critic from 1945 until his death in 1963.

Liebling never forgave the Pulitzer heirs for shutting down the *New York World* in 1931, throwing out of work 2,867 employees, one of them the young Liebling. On the evidence of *The Press*, a recently reissued collection of his criticism, this catastrophe traumatized Liebling: it shaped everything he would later write about the press. "The end of the *World* marked the beginning of realism in the relation of American newspaper employees to their employers," he would write. "The employees had been realistic for a long time." He said the heirs took \$25 million in profits out of the *World*, put nothing back, and abruptly sold the *World* to Roy Howard for \$5 million more. The *World* disappeared into Howard's *Evening Telegram*.

Liebling's cold farewell to William Randolph Hearst, who died in 1951, is one of the highlights of this collection. Hearst was an incompetent newspaperman, Liebling argued persuasively, but he had inherited \$30 million in mining stocks and he spent it on talent and hoopla. "When [Hearst] reached the point, in the '20s, where the store-bought empire had to support itself from its own earnings, his long retreat began." Hearst's lasting contribution to American journalism was that "he made it so expensive to compete that no mere working newspaperman has been able to found an important paper in this century."

The press he loved to hate.

Press reformers remember Liebling as something of a god. He had a long run at *The New Yorker* and wrote with great integrity and felicity, and with a fetching dualism: he clearly loved the press as much as he regretted it, and he really was quite easy to please—simple good reporting would do it. His dark suspicions of publishers did not reduce the affection for him in the ranks. When (*MORE*), the late New York journalism review, scheduled a convention for the little folk in 1972, simultaneous with a meeting of the American Association of Newspaper Publishers at the Waldorf-Astoria, the convention was named in Liebling's memory.

I.F. Stone got a man of the year award at that first Liebling convocation, and so I was amused, reading *The Press*, to come across Liebling impaling Stone on the same harpoon that skew-



Liebling committed the rudeness of paying attention to the press, and the result could be hilarious.

ered a frequent target, the right-wing pundit Westbrook Pegler. Liebling had caught them both committing the sin, flagrant among deep-feeling pundits, of doom-saying. (Stone: "The little piano player in the White House is improvising his country's Gotterdammerung." Pegler: "The awful truth seems to be that the republic is dead." All this means is that neither man liked Truman, and Liebling commented, "I like to think of Peg and Izzy,

in accord at last, huddled together on the forward thwart of the first lifeboat leaving the ship.")

Liebling knew nonsense when he read it, and he read it every day. This brings us to one of his favorite targets (after publishers), which he isolated by dividing into three groups—the journalistic working class. In ascending order of self-satisfaction he found: "1. The reporter, who writes what he sees. 2. The interpretive reporter, who writes

what he sees and what he construes to be its meaning. 3. The expert, who writes what he construes to be the meaning of what he hasn't seen."

Liebling enormously admired reporters who report, reporting being, like homework to children, that thing newspapers will do almost anything to avoid (it's often expensive, for one reason). Still, something found out and explained can matter in the short run, maybe even in the long. Liebling had no particular problem with the often useful interpreter, and was one himself. His strengths and his limits as a critic lay in his unwillingness to go much beyond what he found inside the papers he read. He was a student of the press' history, but he did not pretend to the same clarity about its future. He would have felt like the sort of fraud he ridiculed.

Liebling's great skill was to make the press hilarious just by turning its pages and, as it were, reading aloud. He did it the rudeness of paying attention.

Old and new.

There is a genially archaic tint to *The Press*. Reflecting its times, the journalism that Liebling cites is much more unbridled, raw, and unselfconscious than either the press or the country today.

Liebling was only 59 when he died. Had he gone on writing another dozen years, he would have observed the Vietnam war, the Pentagon Papers and Watergate—events that altered journalism and the nation's soul.

Continued on page 23

FICTION

Original sins in '60s South

Original Sin

By Lisa Alther
Knopf, 391 pp., \$13.95

By Jane Marcus

Mark Twain would claim Lisa Alther as a kindred spirit in this bitterly humorous evocation of American politics and people. And Faulkner at his funniest would sense a sister sufferer from the South. *Original Sins* is a better title for her first book, with its unforgettable scenes, including the classic of a couple trying to copulate while chained to the ceiling. *Kinflicks* just fits the cinematic sense of home movies that shapes the new book.

Woody Allen ought to be forced to pay the huge debt he owes American women by making a movie out of this book. If a reviewer can be pardoned for casting, I can see Woody Allen now as Raymond Tatro, the hillbilly intellectual who goes to

New York, becomes a civil rights worker, abandons blacks for the cause of white workers, tries to organize a union in the Newland, Tenn., mill and goes back to the land, growing vegetables in the hollow while his cousins concentrate on TV, modern plumbing and cars. Emily Prince, the Southern Princess who marries a rich radical and ends up as a lesbian mother, is a perfect role for Meryl Streep. And Diane Keaton is a natural for Maria, the gorgeous, tough, intelligent New York Jewish lesbian radical. (Alther has repented her original sin in *Kinflicks* with its stereotypical lesbian, by creating a whole new version of Djuna Barnes' *Ladies' Almanack*, in which the lesbians are all ex-heterosexuals, beautiful, bored or angry with men.) And there is a good part for Dolly Parton as Betty Boobs, the high school whore with a heart of gold, who marries Jed Tatro's best friend and works in the mill. Raymond's brother Jed is a

Good Old Boy with a vengeance, a dumb football hero with STUD on his license plates. He marries the boss' daughter, Sally Prince, an uptight little Southern lady, who manipulates her home-making image into a TV show. Jed goes off to a motel with Betty, and they are mowed down by a truck as they leave. This brings the characters together at the funeral with their assorted children.

The Tatro boys, the Prince girls and Donny, the black son of Kathryn, the Prince's maid, were born into a Southern rural idyll. They long for the pastoral peace of childhood before race and class and sex divided them. Kathryn refuses to be raped by a white man, belts him with a bottle, and runs off to New York, which is what separates the Five to begin with. The five stories converge and separate and converge again in a

Alther's novel may be more revealing of the era than an FoIA file.

very salty soap opera.

The stories of Jed Tatro and Emily Prince and their causes, from civil rights through the antiwar movement, to rural poverty programs, union organizing to the women's movement and lesbian vanguardism, are the core of the novel. Anyone who was caught up in them will alternately wince and howl at Alther's wicked recreation of meetings and arguments.

Sometimes it takes a work of fiction to make us see our own history more clearly. Our moral indignation rouses us to collective action on specific issues that outrage our consciences. We organize, demonstrate and retire until the next issue cries out for new committees. *Original Sins* resembles nothing more than those Victorian novels about causes, with one important exception. Lisa Alther has a sense of humor worthy of the Wife of Bath, though her pilgrims are not going to Canterbury, but to an intellectual and political Big Apple, candy-coated with progressive ideas and rotten at the core.

Think of all our tax money the FBI wasted taping antiwar and civil rights meetings, when the whole epoch can be repeated by a novelist in 600 pages.

Jane Marcus teaches English at the University of Texas at Austin.

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



ART & ENTERTAINMENT

THE WEAVERS

Reunion gives us strength

The Weavers Together Again
Loom Productions, Suite 2017,
250 W. 57th St., New York, NY
10107 (by mail only), \$9.95

By Ron Radosh

Here, finally, is the record of the historic 25th Anniversary concert at Carnegie Hall (*In These Times*, Nov. 26, 1980) and a beautiful job it is. The recording catches the spirit and excitement of the event and is produced with state-of-the-art technology so that we have a clear and crisp sound, so unlike the discs of the '50s and early '60s we've had to depend on till now.

Old timers will note that the Weavers begin and end with a touch of nostalgia—"Darling Corey" and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas"—exactly the numbers used at the famous 1955 Christmas Eve concert at Carnegie Hall. But this record offers more than nostalgia—it is a living testament to the vitality and strength of the Weavers' music and unique sound. Old favorites are sung with fresh verve and perfect blending of voices, as in Merle Travis' "Dark as a Dungeon," or on the soft strains of Pete Seeger's lead on "Kisses Sweeter Than Wine."

But the Weavers also take new directions sometimes not too successfully. Perhaps the strongest and most haunting piece of music on the album is a new work—their arrangement of Holly Near's "Hay Una Mujer," a lament for a "disappeared" Chilean woman. Ronnie Gilbert sings lead on this, revealing the power and dignity she can bring to a song. As if they sought to convey the unity of struggles of the past and present, the Weav-

ers followed this in the concert (and on the record) with "Venga Jaleo," one of the moving ballads sung by the International Brigades, who volunteered to fight Franco's forces during the Spanish Civil War. Pete Seeger has been singing this since he recorded it back in the '30s, but this time his banjo playing takes on a mandolin-like quality, evoking the flavor and feeling of Spain and the battles of yesteryear.

Fred Hellerman offers a soft and lilting lullaby to his newborn son, "Tomorrow Lies in the Cradle," which enables us to see

again what a fine musician and craftsman he is. Lee Hays shines in his introductory comments to the classic carol about Paul and Silas, "All Night Long." But the Weavers fail on Holly Near's "Something About the Women." While the song in one sense reflects the concern of Ronnie Gilbert for feminist issues, and which gives her own performance a biting edge and strength missing in earlier years, the song's complex musical structures are not quite fitting for her voice, and the song comes off as preachy. That song, as well as Hellerman's ersatz country-western "When I'm Down for the Count," might just as well have been replaced.

The record ends with Pete Seeger outdoing himself on the African chant "Wimoweh," and with Leadbelly's "Goodnight Irene," which the Weavers made the charts with in the '50s. And finally, the record is graced by Larry Josephson's



Pete Seeger today; inset, the Weavers then.

lovely liner notes. "An audience composed largely of skeptics, atheists, agnostics, and humanists of the old and new left," he writes, "came close to a religious experience in Carnegie Hall that night." Maybe a bit of an exaggeration, but not much. Now, we can all share that ex-

perience, and thank the Weavers for showing us they can take risks, and still be singing with and for us after all these years. ■ Ron Radosh, a professor of American history at Queens Community College, writes frequently on American folk music and culture.

FRED SMALL

Work songs for hard times

By Richard Udell

If you were at the MUSE "No Nukes" rally at Battery Park in 1979, the 1979 convention of District 8 Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, this year's labor-sponsored "March on Harrisburg," El Salvador-inspired "March on the Pentagon" or the DSOC convention you probably heard the music of Fred Small, a 28-year-old singer-songwriter from Cambridge, Mass.

His repertoire includes songs on nuclear power, workers' rights and safety, sexism, racism and the New Right. But until recently you could only hear him at a rally or in one of a half-dozen New England coffee houses. His newly-released "No More Vietnams" on the single *For El Salvador* and a debut al-



Fred Small gets audiences on their feet.

bum scheduled for fall promise that Small will be reaching new audiences.

Small is an anomaly in con-

temporary music. A Phi Beta Kappa Yale graduate with a law degree from the University of Michigan, Small composed his first song during finals of his first semester at law school.

"My writing arose from my sense of a vacuum," he explained. "I grew up with the topical song explosion of the mid-'60s and knew first-hand the power and persuasiveness of songs that dealt with vital issues." In the mid-'70s, though, the songs of people like Phil Ochs and Tom Paxton were no longer getting airplay. Small's lyrics closely resemble those of Ochs in humor and criticism, though not in sarcasm.

What began as a pastime became a career last September when Small left his post as an environmental attorney with the Conservation Law Foundation of New England to devote himself to music.

Both his love of music and his concern for the issues he sings about come through loud and clear. His philosophy is much like that of Woody Guthrie. Songwriting is, for him, an organizing technique. "Music can carry people through hard times. That's why we have work songs—because it makes work easier." At rallies and conventions he specializes in songleading. For him sing-alongs are "the cultural

analogue to participatory democracy."

"Music is an incredibly effective means of communication, less threatening than a speech or an editorial," he said. Few of his songs are preachy. Several have a rallying effect. His tune "Stand Up" never fails to unite an audience in song, let alone get them on their feet. The refrain goes, "Stand up, stand up/ tell 'em you're here/ Shout it loud for the whole world to hear/ they're long overdue for a kick in the rear/ stand up and tell 'em you're here."

Small's best songs, and the ones he admires most of other performers, tell a story. In the tradition of Pete Seeger, Small uses stories as a way to get people interested in an issue. Seeger has said, "A rhymed editorial is worse than useless. Phooey. Underline this: *An editorial in rhyme does not make a song.*" Small agrees.

"Don't sing 'Capitalism is unjust!'" he said. "Sing instead the story of a worker fired for trying to organize a union, a town exploited and abandoned by a runaway plant or a community that sets up its own health care clinic." In his song about El Salvador Small tells of women raped and tortured, the struggle of the poor and the savagery of the U.S.-backed junta.

Another of his songs, to appear on the forthcoming album, first appeared in different form in the pages of *In These Times*. "Letter for May Alice Jeffers" was adapted from a letter to the editor describing this elderly black woman's life in a 1978 issue. His precision fingerpicking and facility with meter promise to make this song a classic. ■

Richard Udell is an organizer for the Critical Mass Energy Project, the Nader anti-nuclear group in Washington, D.C. "For El Salvador" is available from Boston Mobilization for Survival, 13 Sellers St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139 for \$2.00 plus 85¢ postage. The album will be out in September.



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VOICES

Make-believe terrorism has real lessons

The policy-makers had good reasons for playing 20/20's game.

By Bob Higgins

On August 6th, ABC's 20/20 staged a dramatized terrorist seizure of a full oil tanker and its crew in the New York harbor, with the threat to detonate the oil in a way that would devastate lower Manhattan. Terrorist demands in this seizure covered monetary and political concessions by the U.S. toward the Palestinian cause. The bulk of the show focused on the deliberations of a mock crisis committee, assembled in concert with the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies and composed entirely of current or former government officials. Committee members improvised debate and developments in the crisis and on possible courses of action to recommend to the TV viewer, acting as president. The program ended with the arrival of the terrorist's deadline for action, with time running out on a military "solution" to the crisis because of the danger of igniting the harbor, and with the committee chairman about to recommend negotiating an exchange of the tanker and hostages for air time to broadcast the terrorists' political views.

This show went beyond the day-to-day grounds on which media and state usually meet. The cast itself was a coup for 20/20. Policy-making elites do not ordinarily act in network shows or expose their deliberations, simulated or not, to public scrutiny. Partly for that reason, only a few of the participants were remotely recognizable—Joseph Cisco, Reagan's Navy Undersecretary John Lehman, Ron Nessen, Adam Yarrowinsky.

The cast also indicates the importance that policy-circles attach to properly-cultivated public opinion on terrorism. This priority does not necessarily reflect unanimity on techniques for dealing with terrorism—the mock committee split over negotiated and military "solutions." Yet this split rests on a shared goal of maintaining an international status quo (in the Middle East; and in our client states) that breeds the desperate acts and popular resistance. 20/20 predictably framed terrorism as an inevitability, emphasizing the *drama* of the act. This production sold the sense of threat as a media attraction.

Dramatic narration, cuts to speeding police cars, and cinema verite shots of preparations for disaster helped create this climate.

The potential of this media/political theater is ominous—the crime show/law and order combine of the 1960s on a new, explicitly anti-left plane. Crucial to the potential of this combination is the domestic unleashing of the CIA, one of Reagan's priorities and apparently a matter of increasing agreement among policy elites. ABC's simulated crisis provided a plausible case for this unleashing. The simulation involved a borderline case—international terrorism aimed at a domestic target. The CIA "chief" (former head of the CIA terrorism section, Ray Cline) played a major role in the drama, competently and calmly relaying information to the advisory committee. He also played a key role in a revealing scene where the committee disregarded restrictions on domestic surveillance.



ABC is helping the government shape your opinion on terrorism.

tional terrorism aimed at a domestic target. The CIA "chief" (former head of the CIA terrorism section, Ray Cline) played a major role in the drama, competently and calmly relaying information to the advisory committee. He also played a key role in a revealing scene where the committee disregarded restrictions on domestic surveillance.

In that episode, an American professor (actually Professor

Judith Kipper, member of the right wing American Enterprise Institute) emerges as a contact with the terrorists. To keep tabs on her and to verify her contacts, the committee would like to tap her phone. While exuding concern about the need for a court order, the committee proceeds without one because of time problems. In such a grave situation as the crisis, to paraphrase the CIA "chief," the public will certainly understand the decision to tap without authorization.

In this scene, the "game" format of the drama is essential. The game draws viewers into playing, into identifying with the players on the advisory committee. After all, the committee is to make a recommendation to you, the viewer-as-President, on how to save a tanker, hostages, and Manhattan. Don't you want the best, most complete information?

Given the long history of state surveillance, disruption, and repression of the left, the political potential of the terrorism label is frightening. Shows like this one promote a climate in which terrorism can mean almost any form of organized resistance to the status quo.

Bob Higgins is a student of political science at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.



In Peter Watkin's *THE WAR GAME* (above) the unthinkable was staged.

Fear is an instinct for survival

By Liane Ellison Norman

I'm scared. I'm sitting at my desk. Out the window there's a strip of clean sky with bright clouds over the neighbor's roof. The wind's a miracle in this heat wave. I hear an electric lawnmower, a wasp on the windowglass, a sparrow under the eaves. I feel the ache of loss. Two of my children are in California, working as farm hands. The other's in Vermont, playing Haydn trios and Mozart quartets on her violin. I want to see them, tell them, let them know the love I feel, the hopes I have. But what if I never see them again?

The other night my husband and I were sitting contented on the old front porch swing behind the cool screen of grapeleaves. The rusted chain on my side broke: I fell, a sudden racket. My instant though was, this is how it will be when the bombs begin to come. Out of nowhere. The swing will fall, a telephone pole or a car will come flying. There'll be great noise, shock. Where will the children be? Then, nothing.

Today the world's been almost too sweet to bear. I've felt

tears, thinking of the still places where I grew up in the Wasatch Mountains of Utah, where aspens quaked and wind in douglas firs made the sound of icy streams, where if you looked hard, discreet creatures trafficked busily in the trees and rocks and grasses. I can think backward, but not forward.

My son's nearly draft age. Raised a Quaker, he's a firm conscientious objector. I think of other boys, not raised Quaker, but loved as dearly. There's no war afoot, no nation attacking ours, nothing that can be won by war. Nevertheless, they are to be drafted, we hear—nothing official, just news in the air, the way warnings travel in the Wasatch among jays and squirrels and deer.

I've talked to a lot of people lately about fear and grief. It makes me tearful and shakey—they too. A group of us talked about the arms race. We told one another of our fears. Some wept. Some trembled. Some flushed. One screamed. The women said, "I fear," or "I'm scared that," wept and shivered. It was harder for the men. "People fear," or "We should," they said, but they wept and shivered too. One man spoke in meta-

phor, then broke down. "I'm scared," he said.

It's harder for the men—they've had their natural inclinations bent and broken the way Chinese girls once suffered bound feet. They're scared, but scared of being scared.

But being afraid is nothing to be ashamed of. Fear and pain are nature's way of warning that something's wrong. But most of us, immobilized like animals at night, stand hypnotized in the glitter of the headlights that bear down on us. That's how I've felt, unable to work on the book that clutters my desk, over whose top I've sought the sky and the wind and the outdoor sounds. A book's a big job. You begin knowing it will take a long time, having to assume you have a long time, a future to write, a future to be read.

I don't need more facts. I know enough to know that all the new weapons, all the expendable young men, can't defend me. I'm tired from this anxiety, wondering whether I'll see my children again, whether the Wasatch mountains and the sparrow under the caves are doomed, whether I have time to finish my book.

These feelings, this fear, this grief, this anger—they're natural and sane impulses to survive. ■ Liane Ellison Norman, who teaches English at the University of Pittsburgh, is a Quaker.

CULTURE SHOCK

PREFAB NOVELS

The latest addition to the generic section of the supermarket is the generic novel. It comes in Romance, Science Fiction, Mystery and Western, is a standard price and promises all the basic ingredients of brand name novels.

AMERICAN INGENUITY

A motorized pogo stick has been invented; it gets about 30,000 hops a gallon.



FINALLY

The newest Emily Post etiquette book offers advice to the hostess on what to do when the guests light a joint. If you're worried, she says, just apologize for "being a spoil-

sport" and tell them not to. No advice, however, on how to dispose of the offending item. (Zodiac)

A VOTE FROM GOD

A group called "Citizens for Reagan" have interpreted the president's near-miss assassination as a sign from God supporting the Reagan program. Its fundraising letter urges donations to back up the godly endorsement. (Zodiac)

Vietnam

Continued from page 11

had to be shelved when it became apparent that their chief effect was to increase the number of refugees and further lower production.

In the face of this, it seems clear that the model of economic development in the north has little to offer to the south, despite some extremely successful producer-cooperative ventures such as the *Tin Sang* newspaper co-op and the Ho Chi Minh City lacquerware factory.

The leaders of Vietnam are for the most part elderly men who, after leading their country through decades of struggle, might understandably be stuck in their ways. On the contrary, however, they have shown themselves open to new ideas in ways that would be quite impossible in a truly Stalinist state.

They recognized that if the economy of Vietnam is ever to revive they will have to look beyond their own experience in the north or that of the Soviet Union for inspiration. Instead they have embarked on a series of radical economic experiments.

Just recently, three private import-export companies have been set up in Ho Chi Minh City. They will operate in competition with the none-too-efficient state trading company. The go-ahead has also been given in principle to a trade promotion center to be run by former businessmen. The center is expected to have the authority to establish direct trading links with the outside world in an effort to market locally produced goods without reference to the inefficient state trading machinery.

Certain selected cooperatives, instead of having to sell their produce to the state at a fixed price, are being allowed to sell directly on the free market. That move has boosted production and wages, but it has also resulted in enormous inequalities in earnings. Since there is not yet any form of income tax, these inequalities will go unchecked for the time being.

Perhaps the boldest experiment so far has been taking place at Long An, a prosperous market town just south of Ho Chi Minh City. Here, last November, the authorities introduced what Ronald Reagan would call a "free enterprise zone" and what the Vietnamese call a "one-price policy."

For a trial period, the ration system—under which all government employees can buy essential commodities at heavily subsidized prices—was abolished. Instead the wages of government employees were substantially increased to enable them to buy on the free market. This also meant that local farmers were no longer obliged to sell part of their production to the state at fixed prices.

Apparently the effect on production was dramatic: the amount of commodities such as pork and eggs on the market trebled. But the results are being treated with caution, since Long An is an exceptionally prosperous market town and the experiment took place at the time of a very good rice harvest. Had it occurred at another time or in another place, the outcome might have been different.

In the long term, however, no amount

of experimenting will solve Vietnam's massive problems. What the country needs above all is good harvests, its own oil supplies and a stable international situation that will enable it to demobilize part of the huge army presently tied down in Kampuchea and on the border with China.

Among other things, a settlement in Kampuchea would remove one of the main sticking points in Vietnam's relations with China. If relations with China could ever be normalized—they will nev-

"noble and generous action of the Soviet Union" in Afghanistan; the Russian tourists whose tours seem to cost only a fraction of the price charged to other visitors.

Since the war the Russians are said to have increased the price of oil they send to Vietnam by nearly 20 times—to the point where it is just below the OPEC price. The current black market price of gasoline is 91 Dong (\$28) a gallon.

On top of which the quality of technicians trained in Eastern Europe or the



Five years after reunification, most farmers in the south continue to sell their produce on the free market.

er be the same again after China's 1979 invasion—Vietnam could begin to dismantle its huge army. At the moment, most of the best technicians, administrators and engineers, not to mention at least 50 percent of all government spending, are tied down in the armed forces.

Dependence on the Soviets.

In the meantime, Vietnam is utterly dependent upon the Soviet Union for supplies of oil, food grain and huge quantities of military hardware. The Vietnamese fought very hard for their independence and it need not be supposed that they relish dependence on any superpower.

Nor are they naive enough to pretend there is no price to pay. Already there are small signs: the Vietnamese soldiers goose-stepping outside the mausoleum of Ho Chi Minh in Hanoi's Ba Dinh Square; Vietnamese support for the

Soviet Union is far below that of officials trained in France or the U.S. This is painfully obvious on some enterprises in the south, where Soviet-trained technicians find themselves working alongside counterparts trained in the West.

In due course the Soviet Union will want naval bases in Vietnam. (Russian warships already have "refueling facilities" and it is a moot point when a refueling facility becomes a base.) No doubt the West will reserve the right to whine that this proves that Vietnam has always been a Soviet satellite.

But what choice do they have? In the circumstances it might have been understandable if Vietnam had immediately after the war thrown its lot in, lock, stock and barrel, with the Soviet Union. But it did not. The Vietnamese government tried very hard to develop relations with the West—the U.S. included.

Today it is difficult to escape the con-

cluding independent films to a wider audience and sell them to wider markets.

Clearly, if this generation of filmmakers is going to get past its "first wave," it'll take a fierce amount of entrepreneurial hustle. And as everyone seems aware, it'll also take the serving of a community's needs. The recent success these young filmmakers—many of them still graduate students—is as yet, more a sign of hope than a firm stand. Their achievements make it possible—indeed, necessary—to ask the next pointed questions: what is it that black Americans need to know, and how do filmmakers conduct a dialogue to serve that need?

"After all," cautions Haile Gerima, a black filmmaker (*Bush Mama*; *Wilmington 10*, U.S.A. 10,000) who no longer includes his films in festivals but concen-

cludes that—with the notable exception of Sweden—many Western countries still consider themselves to be at war with Vietnam—albeit war by other means.

Two years ago a World Bank loan to Vietnam was withheld after the United States threatened to withdraw its contribution to the Bank if the loan went ahead. Recent visitors to a hospital in Ho Chi Minh City were shown children suffering from malnutrition. The doctor in charge said the problem got worse since the Common Market cut off supplies of surplus milk powder to the hospital in mid-1979.

Last year arrangements were made to enable former civil servants of the French colonial regime to receive their pensions in Vietnam at a favorable rate of exchange. The arrangements fell through at the last minute—apparently because the French had been hobbled by the Americans.

The result has been to drive Vietnam deeper into the arms of the Soviet Union. One American-educated former high official of the old regime, now an economic adviser to the new one, says: "I wish I could speak openly to the West. I would say loudly, 'You have got to help Vietnam—otherwise it will fall into the Soviet sphere, and once in it will be very difficult to get out.'"

Help for Vietnam should not be based on a desire to turn the country into a happy hunting ground for Western capital. The Western model of economic development is as irrelevant to the needs of such a poor rural country as is Soviet state socialism, weighed down as it is by bureaucracy and over-centralization.

What Vietnam desperately needs is breathing space, relief from the endless litany of disasters—man-made and natural—that have cursed its poor, exhausted people for all of living memory.

From where Vietnam is now standing there are two roads forward, both clearly sign-posted. One is marked "Stalinism" and leads to a bureaucratic, authoritarian, police-ridden society. The other leads to a humane, "small is beautiful," non-aligned type of socialism of the kind to which many socialists in the West aspire.

It is by no means inevitable that Vietnam should follow the first path, but with every day the West maintains its policy of isolating Vietnam, time is running out.

Chris Mullin, a former London correspondent for In These Times, has been filing a series of reports from Southeast Asia.

Movies

Continued from page 13

films. Big brother isn't so big—they're in the same boat we are."

Black independents can and do link up with other independents, though. They share in the slowly-growing network of independent film services. The Black Filmmaker Foundation, for instance, works closely with the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, lobbying for access to public TV time for independents and for grant opportunities. Hudlin among others works on the Independent Feature project and the America Film Market, two new organizations that

trates on community showing, "this isn't the first time that black filmmakers have emerged. The audience you create today will betray you tomorrow if there isn't an honest marriage between audience and filmmaker."

"For a culture to survive you need three things. You need creative artists; an audience—and this one has been built by Hollywood; and honest critics. Consumers, filmmakers and critics—we create each other. A work of art is the result of a synthesis between the struggle of all three."

The Black Filmmaker Foundation's address is WNYC-TV, One Centre St., 26th floor, NYC 10007. Chamba Notes is available from P.O. Box 1669, Hollywood, CA 90028.

CALENDAR

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is \$20.00 for two insertions and \$10.00 for each additional insert, for copy of 40 words or less (additional words are 35¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of Bill Rehm.

CORNWALL, CT

August 26-30

Left Economic Strategy for the 1980s: URPE (Union for Radical Political Economics) Annual Summer Conference at Camp Mohawk. Speakers include: Barry Commoner, Mark Green, Barry Bluestone, Sam Bowles, Joan Greenbaum, Judy Gregory, Carol O'Cleiracain, Anno Saxenian and Harley Shaiken.

Must pre-register: URPE, 40 Union Square West, Room 901, New York, NY 10003. (212) 691-5722.

NEW YORK, NY

September 3-6

Annual meeting of the Caucus for a New Political Science will be all about feminism and socialism. At the New York Hilton. For more information contact: CNPS, 420 West 118th St., Room 733, New York, N.Y. 10027.

WASHINGTON, DC

September 26-27

First national conference of the National Coalition Against the Death Penalty at the 4-H Center. Speakers include Ramsey Clark and Coretta Scott King. For details contact: Anne Headley, 324 C St., SE, Washington, DC 20003, or call (202) 547-3635.

DIRECTORY

The Directory is published to facilitate contact with organizations frequently referred to in the pages of *In These Times*. Each organization has paid a fee for its listing.

Association for Workplace Democracy

1747 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Washington, DC 20009

Citizens Energy Project

1110 6th Street, N.W., #306 Washington, DC 20001

The Citizens Party of Illinois

109 N. Dearborn, Suite 603 Chicago, IL 60602 (312) 332-2066

Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy

120 Maryland Ave., N.E. Washington, DC 20002

C.O.I.N.—Consumers Opposed to Inflation in the Necessities

2000 P Street, N.W. Suite 413 Washington, DC 20036

DSOC—Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee

853 Broadway, Room 801 New York, NY 10003

Midwest Academy

600 West Fullerton Ave. Chicago, IL 60614

National Center for Economic Alternatives

2000 P Street, N.W. Suite 200 Washington, DC 20036

NAM—New American Movement

3244 N. Clark St. Chicago, IL 60657

New Patriot Alliance

343 S. Dearborn, Room 305 Chicago, IL 60604

Science for the People

897 Main Street Cambridge, MA 02139

Socialist Party

1011 N. 3rd St., No. 201 Milwaukee, WI 53203

Press

Continued from page 19

On the other hand, Liebling's old targets have not disappeared. A recent scenario at the *Tribune* would not have left Liebling without words. During a staff

meeting a member of the sports department raised the question of conflict of interests in the purchase of the Chicago Cubs. "The *Tribune* paper has nothing to do with the Cubs," responded James Squires, the new editor. "The *Tribune* Company is not the *Chicago Tribune*." Then why, asked someone else, hasn't the *Tribune* examined the timely (and potentially embarrassing)

question of whether the *Tribune* Company intends to install lights in Wrigley Field? "You ought to take that up with the sport editor," said Squires. But how can the sports department do its job if the corporate heads refuse to be interviewed about their intentions? *Tribune* president Charles Brumback explained that the Securities and Exchange Commission forbids discussion of such

matters because a publicly held corporation was being sold. Brumback stuck to that answer after one of his financial writers told him he was wrong.

Liebling's wit is his legacy. In this book he gives passing, not very hopeful voice to the idea of labor unions founding their own papers (he delineates the antilabor bias of the press) and descendants-to-be endowing papers—

anything to break the grip of businessmen—but he left behind no Blueprint for the Betterment of Journalism. Liebling wished for more diversity, observed less and less, and remarked with amused rue on the press as he found it. His influence was that tug on pride that draws any trade toward the quality of its criticism. ■ *Michael Miner is an editor of the Chicago Reader.*

CLASSIFIED

PUBLICATIONS

FREE SPEECH and racist agitation; when is a word a word? A respected linguist on free speech. Zionism and the Holocaust—\$2.00. Clarity Press, 175 5th Ave., 11011, NYC, NY 10010.

GAY COMMUNITY NEWS—National weekly. News of Lavender Left; international gay news. Feminist, non-profit. \$3/12 issues. GCN, Dept. INT, 22 Bromfield St., Boston, MA 02108.

WHY NOAM CHOMSKY is wrong in Holocaust debate—a controversial view—see "Free Speech" classified.

HELP WANTED

IN THESE TIMES advertising/promotion department needs help in coordinating its Fifth Anniversary greeting ad campaign. Volunteers in New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles are especially needed. Contact: Bill Rehm, In These Times, 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622. (312) 485-4444.

TWO FULL-TIME coordinators for safe energy media group starting Oct. 1, 1981. Will coordinate ad production, national networking, media workshops. Writing, administrative skills required. Send resume to: Personnel Committee, SECC, 1536 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036.

IN THESE TIMES is looking for people to work evenings, part-time in their circulation department. If interested, call Pat Vander Meer at 489-4444.

THE NORTHERN ROCKIES ACTION Group, an activist training center serving over 100 citizen groups, seeks an Executive Director. Duties include planning NRAG projects and training activities, staff and financial administration, fundraising and public relations. Applicants must have administrative, fundraising and political experience, good communication skills and a willingness to travel. Salary, \$23,000-\$28,000 plus health insurance and vacation. Based in Helena, Montana. Please send resume by Sept. 15 to: Leslie Peterson, NRAG Search Committee, P.O. Box 2497, Jackson, WY 83001.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR for state and local progressive PAC. Qualifications include extensive experience in the electoral arena includ-

ing work with national political campaign organizations, local political campaigns and fundraising. Send resume to R. Davis, 600 W. Fullerton, Chicago, IL 60614.

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

WANTED: GRAPHIC DESIGNER. Permanent part-time position at IN THESE TIMES is now open. Responsibilities include design & production of weekly publication, photo and illustration research and various administrative responsibilities. Hard work but position allows development of creative design. Full-time design experience necessary, publication design preferable. Salary negotiable. Send resume immediately to: Art Dept., In These Times, 1509 N. Milwaukee, Chicago, IL 60622.

ORGANIZER—Experienced organizer to work with multi-issue statewide coalition in North Central Indiana on chapter development and local issue campaigns. Reliable car a must. Competitive salary. Reply by Sept. 1 to: Janelle Cousino, Citizens Action Coalition, 311 W. Washington St., #303, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

FINANCIAL ANALYST—Opening in Detroit for an economist in the UAW Research Department. Major responsibility is analysis and interpretation of corporate financial and economic data in support of collective bargaining, organizing and legal activities of the Union. Candidates should have at least M.A. in economics, be adept at basic statistics and have a problem-solving turn of mind. Courses in accounting useful. Ability to think clearly and write precisely and simply is absolutely necessary. We want someone with a skeptical view of the status quo and a social outlook in tune with a progressive labor union. Excellent starting salary and benefits. An equal opportunity employer. Send resume to: UAW Research Department, 8000

E. Jefferson, Detroit, MI 48214.

FUNDRAISER for national progressive political organization. Extensive experience in fundraising and familiarity with labor unions and progressive organizations is required. Send resume to R. Davis, 600 W. Fullerton, Chicago, IL 60614.

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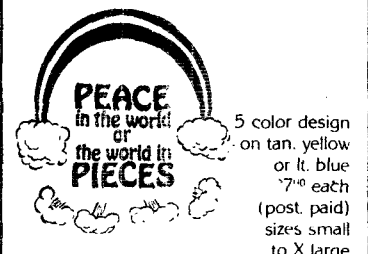
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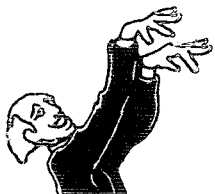


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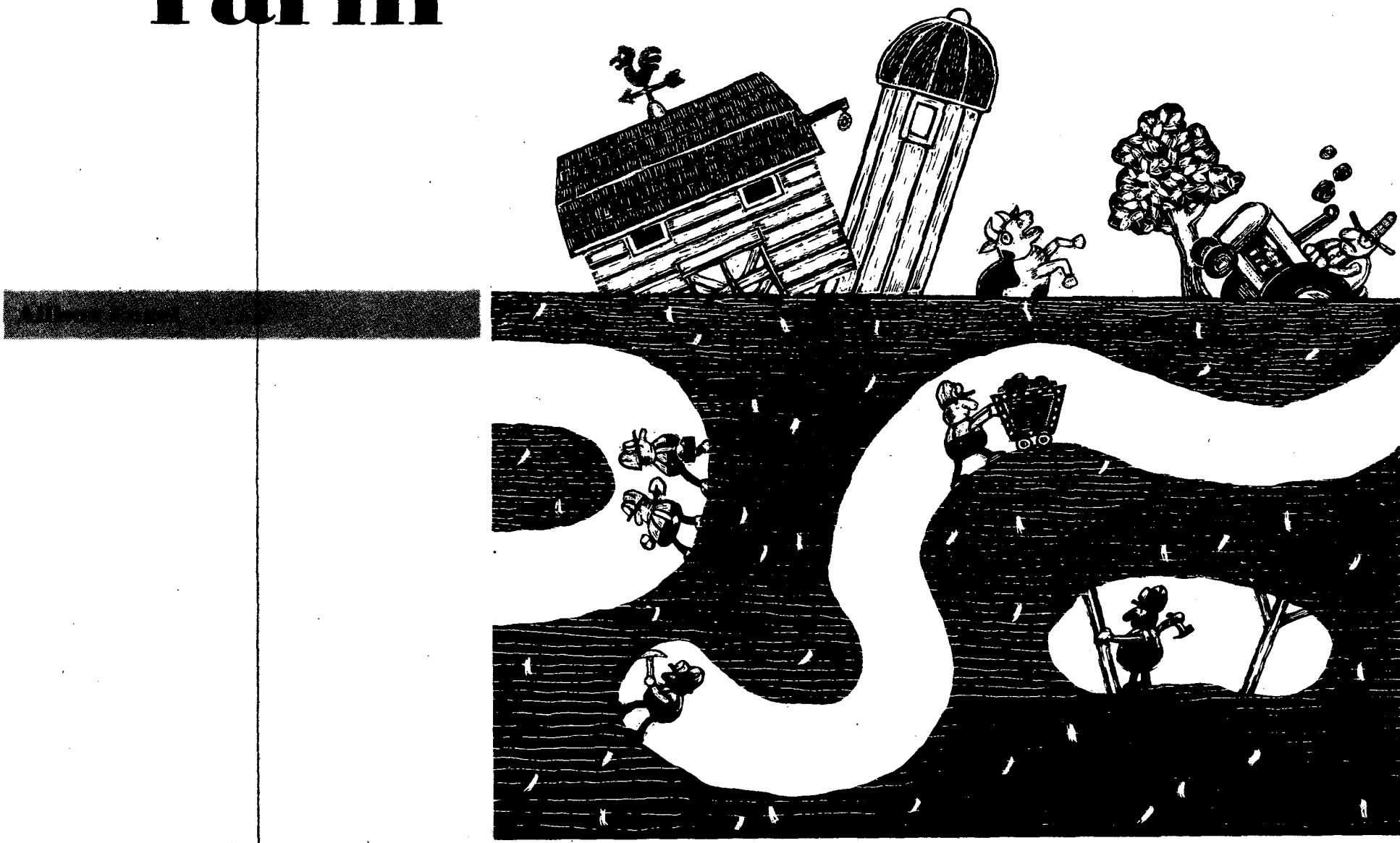
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Undermining the American Farm



CARLINVILLE, ILLINOIS

WHEN YOU DRIVE BY the green, check-board fields of corn and soy beans near this southwest Illinois town, they appear orderly and tranquil. But hundreds of feet beneath the calm surface of prime farmland here that sells for as much as \$3,200 an acre, there is a different world—a beehive of men, material, and machinery digging out soft, high-sulphur coal.

Above ground, a casual onlooker would be hard pressed to notice anything amiss, but farmers know every ridge and valley of their crop lands. And many of those who have had coal extracted from beneath their farms are angry about the consequences. The mining, they say, is causing their land to sink, disrupting drainage and reducing the harvest.

Sinking, or "subsidence," may take decades to show up after farmland has been mined underground. "I'm concerned that we are building time bombs for the future," says Jim Frank, the head of Illinois' Division of Natural Resources.

Underground mining is not new in the agricultural midwest, but as this country's appetite for home-grown energy has increased, the number and scale of underground projects have grown accordingly. The stepped-up activity comes at a time when the pressures of urban development, new highways and soil loss due to erosion have placed good farmland at an unprecedented premium.

The clash between using land for food or energy production is at its fiercest in Illinois, an immensely rich agricultural state that also happens to have more soft coal underground—162 billion tons—than any other state in the nation. Between one-fourth and one-half of it is considered recoverable, and last year Illinois mined 63 million tons of coal, making it the

country's fifth largest producer. But Illinois is not alone. In the wheat fields of western North Dakota, the alluvial valley hay ground in Wyoming and Montana, corn fields in Western Kentucky, grain ground in southwest Indiana and parts of Missouri and Iowa, similar battles rage over both strip and underground mining on farmland.

An accurate count of the acres of crop land affected nationwide is hard to come by. The U.S. Bureau of Mines estimates that more than 8 million acres of all types of land have been undermined across the country, and that sinking has affected more than 2 million of those acres. In Illinois, the state Department of Mines and Minerals' rough estimate is that of the more than 750,000 acres of land statewide that is undermined, more than 500,000 acres of it is prime farmland.

Carl Behme, whose farming partnership owns 1,500 acres and raises 4,000 hogs near Carlinville, has had first-hand bitter experience with mining under his cropland. The coal rights under part of Behme's land were sold in 1913—years before he was born. In 1977, Monterey Coal Co., a division of Exxon Coal, began mining under his ground. Almost immediately, Behme said, an 80-acre corn and soybean field began to experience unprecedented problems.

"Water used to drain in the ditches by the railroad tracks on one side," he explained, pointing. "Now, it goes in the middle of the field and sits there. This land was so flat that the former owner used it as a landing strip. I'd hate to try and land a plane here now."

In 1978, the road adjacent to the field developed large cracks and flooded, making it impassable for several months. "It

looked like an earthquake hit," Behme said, pulling out pictures of sinkholes up to 10 feet deep. The coal company did pay for road repairs, but the drainage problems have persisted.

One nearby farmer has erected a sign on a 25-acre field: "Site of Monterey Coal Co. Sink Number One," in disgust over no longer being able to farm the field.

Behme and Monterey are trying to negotiate damages for crop losses, but he is not ruling out the possibility of taking the company to court. "And what's going to happen to our tax base when the coal companies leave?" he asked. "We're going to be dependent on land that's deteriorated."

George L. May, Monterey's general manager, readily agrees that subsidence from his mines' operations cause Behme's problems, but disagrees about the extent of the damage. "Land structures above mines are unpredictable," he said. "But we have engineering plans designed to minimize the disruption to the ground."

Subsidence of farmland is often not visually dramatic, although the problems can be severe. For example, drainage tile lines can cross several farms, meaning that changes in one farm's drainage can affect land miles away. Also, underground mining can draw down an area's water table, and even drain wells.

In 1978, after more than 60 homes, four schools, a church, airport, dam, cemetery, and several commercial buildings in southern Illinois were severely damaged by mine subsidence, the Illinois legislature passed an insurance program to protect against losses from mine sinking. The law applies only to structures, however, not to open land.

The Illinois Farm Bureau supports the concept of designating some prime crop land as unsuitable for mining. Taylor Pensoneau, vice president of the Illinois

Coal Association, the state's trade group, says it would be impossible for the industry to go along with more restrictions on mining under or on prime farm land. Pensoneau said coal companies already have "a heck of a time complying with regulations concerning restoration of prime farm land," such as those in the 1977 Service Mining Control and Reclamation Act, which was recently upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. Restoring farm land to a condition equal to or better than it was before mining, as the act requires, "technologically, is almost impossible," he said.

Said Jim Frank of the Illinois Natural Resources Division, "I see it like the issue of sanitary landfill in the '50s. We took garbage by a river, dumped it, covered it with dirt and then, down the road, we had a Love Canal. I think it's where we are now with underground mining and prime farm land."

Farmers, moreover, are concerned that Interior Secretary James Watt's plans to abolish the five regional offices of the Federal Office of Surface Mining and severely cut the department's inspection divisions mean the 1977 Reclamation Act will be gutted, regardless of the Supreme Court decision.

And so the battle rages on, fueled not only by competing claims on America's food and energy needs, but also by the high financial stakes involved on prime farm land around towns like Carlinville. Not long ago, according to John Terret, who advises farmers on coal leases, there were a lot of outright sales in Illinois at \$50 an acre for coal rights. "Now," he says, "the price has gone well over \$1,000 an acre."

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